



# **Stock Healthy** **Shop Healthy**

 *COMMUNITY TOOLKIT*

## Toolkit developer

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## Acknowledgments

Portions of this guide were adapted from the St. Louis Healthy Corner Store Project Resource Guide, Boston Public Health Commission's Healthy on the Block: Healthy Corner Store Toolkit, and New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Shop Healthy NYC! How to Adopt a Shop guide.

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Published by University of Missouri Extension

Funding for this project is provided in part by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.





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# About the Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy: Community Toolkit

## Who should use this toolkit?

*Anyone wanting to increase access to healthful foods in the local community:*

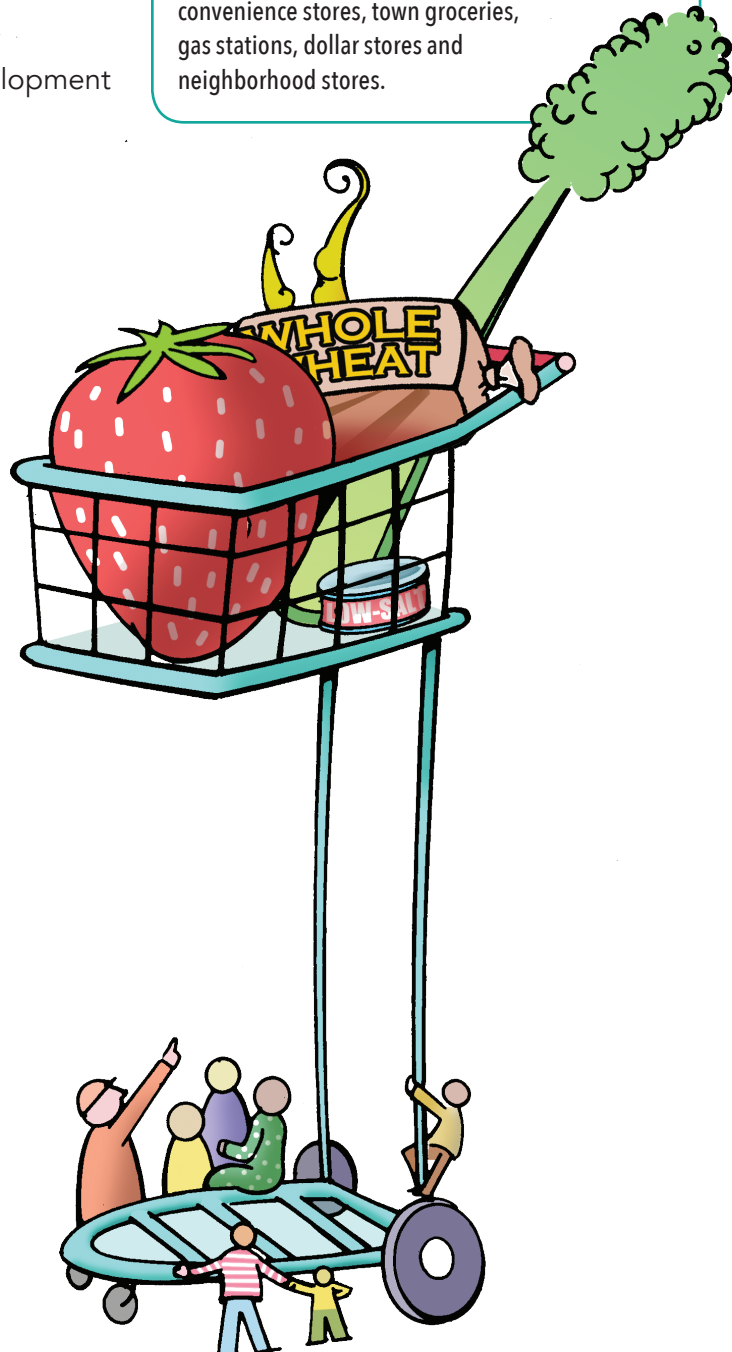
- ▶ Community volunteers
- ▶ Chambers of commerce
- ▶ Local community and economic development departments
- ▶ Public health agencies
- ▶ Nonprofits
- ▶ Service organizations
- ▶ Schools
- ▶ Neighborhood associations

For some community residents, the local small food retailer is the only store to which they have easy access. By encouraging small food retailers to sell more healthy foods and supporting them in their efforts, you can make your community a healthier place for everyone.

### Small food retailers

are food stores that have limited physical space and, typically, a limited selection of foods.

Different communities will have different names for these stores, including corner stores, convenience stores, town groceries, gas stations, dollar stores and neighborhood stores.

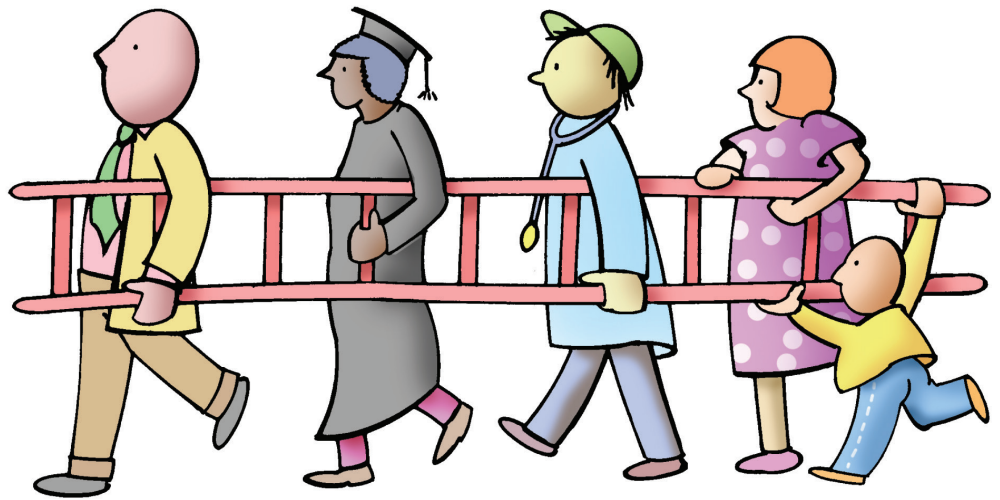




## What's in this toolkit?

Helpful strategies for:

- ▶ Forming a community network
- ▶ Partnering with and promoting a store
- ▶ Providing community outreach and education



The combined ideas in this toolkit constitute a full-scale healthy small food retailer program. Not all communities or stores will be ready or able to implement them all. Community leaders should customize their plans to meet specific, local needs and to ensure that small food retailers in the most underserved areas can become partners in improving the community's health.

This toolkit describes strategies for partnering with your community's small food retailer and promoting healthy eating through nutrition education opportunities and community activities. It is based on lessons learned in the St. Louis Healthy Corner Store Project and Kansas City's Skip the Salt, Help the Heart project, as well as evidence-based practices from programs across the country.

To make this work easier, University of Missouri Extension created the companion *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy: Retailer Toolkit*, a guide that provides store owners with tips for increasing their healthy food inventory, attracting new customers and partnering with community organizations.



### Where can I get more information?

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# 1

## Why: Understanding the issue

In 2013, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimated that 52.5 million people in the U.S., 17 percent of the population, had limited access to a supermarket. People were considered to have limited access if they lived more than a half mile from the closest supermarket in urban areas and more than 10 miles away in rural areas. Widespread evidence from across the country shows that low-income communities and the elderly often have disproportionately less access to healthy foods. Although corner stores, gas stations or convenience stores may be nearby, most lack fresh fruits and vegetables or low-fat snack options. Residents are left with high-priced, high-processed foods, a situation that contributes to the obesity epidemic and other health disparities.

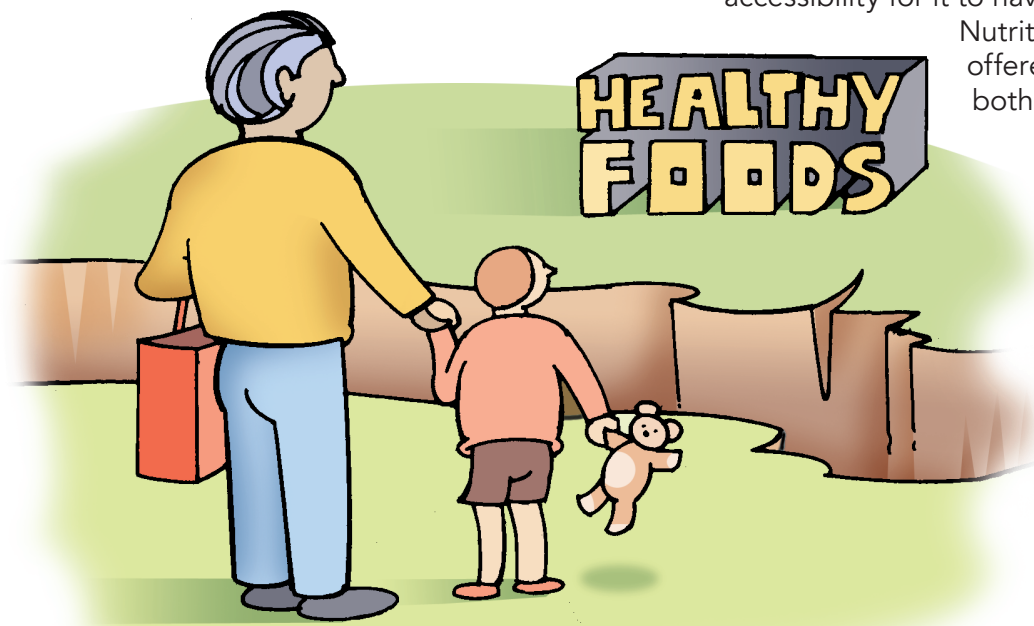
The absence of a grocery store has a major effect on a community's health. Residents of communities without easy access to a supermarket may become reliant on fast-food restaurants, gas stations and corner stores that stock more costly

food with less nutritional value, whereas residents of communities with a supermarket are more likely to eat more fruits and vegetables and less likely to be overweight or obese. Community gardens and farmers markets can improve access to fresh fruits and vegetables, but they are seasonal solutions and do not address this year-round problem.

The most effective strategy for addressing such community access and health issues is twofold. It involves working with local retailers and educating community residents. Residents need to be informed that healthy, affordable foods are now available in the community and educated on how to properly prepare healthy foods and incorporate healthy eating and physical activity into their lifestyle. Retailers need to be encouraged to improve the quality and type of healthy, affordable foods they stock, and supported in their efforts to do so.

It's a delicate balance between increasing access to healthy food and building demand in the community. Simply increasing the accessibility of fresh and healthy foods will not guarantee that residents will buy and eat more of these foods. Education must accompany the increased accessibility for it to have a large-scale effect.

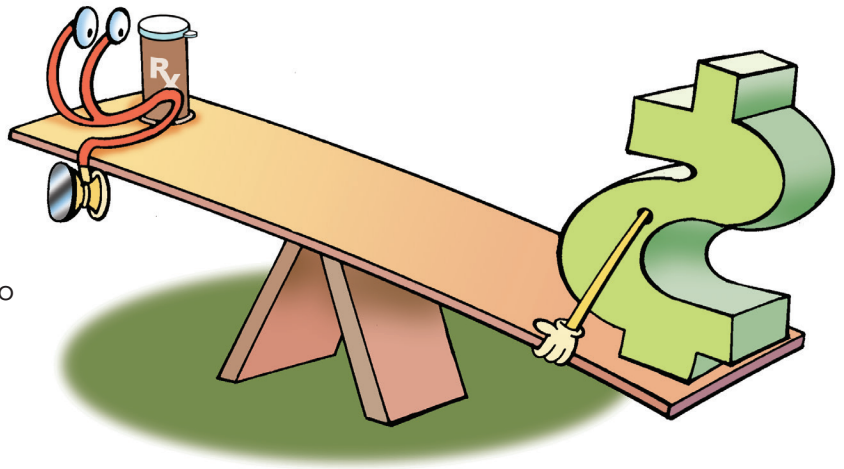
Nutrition education can be offered in a variety of forms both in the store and in the community.



## Why access to healthy foods is important to Missouri

A lack of access to healthy foods has not only health consequences but also financial consequences.

- ▶ About 30 million Americans live in low-income areas with limited access to supermarkets.
- ▶ Nearly 8 percent of the U.S. rural population live in communities lacking access to healthy food, and about 35 percent of those lacking access are low-income.
- ▶ More than 72 million U.S. adults and 1.8 million Missouri adults are obese.
- ▶ Obesity-related health-care expenses cost the state of Missouri an estimated \$2.6 billion a year.
- ▶ Obesity and poor diet are significant risk factors for heart disease, which is the No. 1 cause of death in Missouri and a major cause of hospitalizations.
- ▶ Nearly 10 percent of Missouri adults have diabetes — the leading cause of kidney failure, nontraumatic lower-limb amputations and new cases of blindness, and a major cause of heart disease and stroke.



## Why communities should work with small food retailers

Rural and urban stores are part of the economic and social fabric of a community. A part of everyday life, they not only provide provisions of life to their customers but also fulfill many other roles — as a community builder, employer, economic force and gathering place.

Small food retailers represent an opportunity to increase the availability of healthy foods in a community. Although partnering with a store may be a new idea for organizations as well as for store owners, it enables a community to address the healthy food access issue. The *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* program provides toolkits, resources and a website to guide you through the process.

A comprehensive approach to closing the food gap in any community engages small food retailers (supply) and the community (demand). This partnership is necessary to fully understand the current availability of healthy foods in the community, identify food access barriers, support local retailers, build community demand and provide nutrition education.

## Understanding the issue

Accessibility to healthy, affordable foods is a complex problem, and each community's food access issue is different. You will need a comprehensive view of the specific issues in your community to identify the best strategies to address the problem.

**Demographic information.** Gathering demographic information on your community is a good place to start. Common indicators related to food access issues include population density, socioeconomic status and transportation. You can find this information through the U.S. Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov>, and the University of Missouri Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED), <http://www.oseda.missouri.edu>. When doing your research, these are some demographics to consider:

- ▶ Total population of the area of focus
- ▶ Percentage of that population considered lower-income
- ▶ Vehicle ownership rates in the community
- ▶ Breakdown of population by age
- ▶ Number of single-headed households
- ▶ Education level of residents
- ▶ Property vacancy rates
- ▶ Food security

**Accessibility.** Access to healthy, affordable foods is not just about whether residents can easily get to a store, although that ability is certainly a key issue. To determine how much of an issue accessibility is, pull together information on these aspects of the community:

- ▶ Nearest food sources — such as farmers markets, gas stations, food pantries, convenience stores, corner stores, town groceries and, potentially, fast-food and other restaurants
- ▶ Distance to each of those food sources — common distance benchmarks for a supermarket to be considered inaccessible: in urban areas, one-half mile or one mile; in rural areas, 10 miles or more
- ▶ Location of areas in the community without ready access to healthy, affordable food
- ▶ Transportation barriers — such as low-income and elderly residents not owning or having regular access to a vehicle; a lack of public transportation and free or low-cost shuttles, such as OATS; and sparse or expensive taxi service
- ▶ Geographic barriers — such as a five-lane road without a crosswalk or a busy highway dividing a community from the nearest supermarket
- ▶ Financial barriers — even when physically accessible, some healthy items are expensive at small food retailers (because they buy in smaller quantities than large supermarkets) and thus may still be out of reach of certain residents

Presenting this information visually may help network members better understand the issue. Ask your regional planning authority or local departments of health, planning or community development if they can help you create a map for your network. You can also create your own map using tools on the websites listed below.

**Availability.** Once you have identified the nearest food sources, the next step is to determine whether they offer healthy foods. (Refer to the healthy food lists on pages 10–11.) For purposes of *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy*, focus on the community's small food retailers — gas stations, convenience stores, corner stores and town

groceries. Consider these three aspects of each accessible food source:

- ▶ Whether the accessible location offers healthy foods
- ▶ The variety of healthy choices it offers
- ▶ The quality of healthy choices it offers

The overall purpose of this step is to determine whether the community has access to a limited or wide variety of quality healthy choices, or whether it is surrounded by fast-food restaurants and stores selling candy and high-calorie snacks.

**Do you live in an area with limited access to a supermarket?  
These websites can help you find out.**

**USDA Food Access Research Atlas**

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas.aspx>

Create food access maps using data on population density, socioeconomic status and other measures related to food access in an area. Download data about the area.

**USDA Food Environment Atlas**

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-environment-atlas.aspx>

Get a visual overview of a community's ability to access healthy food. Find information on store or restaurant proximity, food prices, food and nutrition assistance programs, and community characteristics.

**Community Commons**

<http://www.communitycommons.org>

Create maps using data on communities, health, food, environmental issues and economic development. Build topic-based reports. Network with groups across the country.

**Policy Map**

<http://www.policymap.com>

Create maps that depict the food accessibility problem in your community. Find data on grocery demand, the amount of money residents spend outside of the community for groceries, and other access-related topics. During the seven-day free trial, you can download various data to review at your own pace.

# 2 What is healthy?

The U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans define healthy foods to generally include fruits and vegetables, lean meats, low-fat dairy, and packaged products that are low in salt, sugar and fat — especially saturated and trans fat. Examples of specific food items in each of these categories are provided below.

## In the cooler

Beverages	Fruits and vegetables	Dairy	Protein foods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bottled water</li> <li>• 100% fruit juices, such as orange, grapefruit or apple <i>Look for the words <b>100% juice</b> on the label.</i></li> <li>• Low-sodium vegetable juices <i>The label should say <b>no salt added</b> or <b>low sodium</b>.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole fruits, such as apples, grapes, pears, cantaloupe, grapefruit, strawberries, peaches, nectarines, kiwi</li> <li>• Whole vegetables, such as asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, green onions, lettuce, spinach, leafy greens, mushrooms, peppers, radishes</li> <li>• Grab-and-go containers of sliced fruits or vegetables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonfat, skim or 1% milk</li> <li>• Low-fat or nonfat yogurt</li> <li>• Low-fat cheese</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lean meats <i>Lean cuts of beef and pork have little visible fat inside the muscle (white marbling) or around the edges. Ground meat should be 10% fat or less (for example, 90/10 meat is 90% lean and 10% fat).</i></li> <li>• Fish without breading or batter</li> <li>• Poultry</li> <li>• Eggs</li> </ul>





## In the freezer

Beverages	Fruits and vegetables	Dairy	Protein foods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frozen 100% fruit juice concentrate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frozen fruit, without added sugar</li> <li>Frozen vegetables, without added sauce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low-fat frozen yogurt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lean meats <i>Lean cuts of beef and pork have little visible fat inside the muscle (white marbling) or around the edges. Ground meat should be 10% fat or less (for example, 90/10 meat is 90% lean and 10% fat).</i></li> <li>Fish and poultry without breading or batter</li> </ul>

## On the shelf

Beverages	Fruits and vegetables	Protein foods	Grains
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bottled water</li> <li>100% fruit juices <i>Look for the words <b>100% juice</b> on the label.</i></li> <li>Low-sodium vegetable juices <i>The label should say <b>no salt added</b> or <b>low sodium</b>.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fruits such as bananas, grapefruit, limes, melons, oranges and pineapple</li> <li>Vegetables such as potatoes, onions, tomatoes and avocados</li> <li>Canned fruit in 100% fruit juice</li> <li>Canned vegetables and tomato sauce labeled low or reduced sodium</li> <li>Dried fruits and vegetables, such as raisins and cranberries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dried or canned beans <i>If canned, use low- or reduced-sodium varieties.</i></li> <li>Low- or no-salt seeds and nuts</li> <li>Peanut butter and other nut butters</li> <li>Canned meat or fish in water <i>For example, chicken, tuna, salmon</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whole-grain bread, pasta, crackers and cereals <i>The first ingredient should include the word <b>whole</b>. For example: INGREDIENTS: whole-wheat flour, sugar, oil, etc.</i></li> <li>Oatmeal: regular, quick or instant</li> <li>Brown or wild rice</li> <li>Baked chips</li> <li>Low- or reduced-salt/ sodium pretzels, popcorn and crackers</li> <li>Granola bars</li> <li>Graham crackers</li> </ul>

# 3

## Forming a community network

Healthy food retail programs vary in size and scope across the country, but the most successful programs have one common ingredient: collaboration. Collaboration means working together on a shared task to achieve a mutual goal, which in this case is to increase access to healthy foods in the local community.

Your network will play a large role in promoting your partner store and its healthy options through advertising, working with the local media, arranging tastings or cooking demonstrations, and organizing a variety of outreach activities to bring people together. Network members may also research, and possibly provide grants or loans for infrastructure or business development. Local universities and extension centers may be able to offer the store a variety of services and may also be willing to join your network.

When recruiting network members, consider the many ways your network can support a small food retailer and organize community outreach and nutrition education activities. Once you have identified the stakeholders in your community, see chapter 6 for a step-by-step guide to building your network-store partnership.

### Who has a stake in your project?

Stakeholders are people or organizations that are interested in addressing food access issues through small food retailers, as well as those that have a stake in the desired outcomes of the project. Everyone eats, so everyone has a stake in this project. However, not everyone will need to be a part of the network that will lead the way to increased access to healthy, affordable foods. The very first step in starting a network is to sit down with your core group and make a list of everyone who may have interest or expertise in this issue.



**Everybody has a stake in this project because everybody eats!**



Stakeholders can be involved in your project in various ways. They may serve on the network team, join a work group, broker relationships with partner agencies, provide meeting space or volunteers, or help spread the word.

In a community project like this one, 80 percent of the work happens outside of regular meetings. So, careful analysis of project stakeholders is vital. A stakeholder analysis involves identifying and assessing the roles of potential partners in the project. This analysis should be conducted at the start of the project but should also continue throughout.

Use the stakeholder analysis chart on page 38 to organize information about potential stakeholders. As you identify specific organizations, list the name of the person who should be contacted about participation in your healthy retail project. As you go through the analysis, identify which stakeholders might best serve as members of the network team and which you may reach out to later to fulfill a specific need. Consider why each organization or individual would be interested in the project. Also, list what resources each stakeholder may have to offer. See page 13 for an example of how to complete the chart.



### Identifying stakeholders to recruit

- ▶ Who is intensely interested in the issue and wants to actively help the program reach its goals?
- ▶ Who is already working on this issue?
- ▶ Will this stakeholder provide a perspective or experience different from you or others in your organization?
- ▶ Whose voices need to be heard? Whose voices are underrepresented or missing?
- ▶ Who are the beneficiaries of a healthy retail program?
- ▶ Who are potential critics of the program?
- ▶ Who is in a position of influence and can raise questions relevant to politicians?
- ▶ Who are the power brokers in the community or organization?
- ▶ Who can build buy-in and support (spread positive messages, encourage others to support and participate)?
- ▶ Who would bring creative energy to the process?

### Working with community partners

Every collaborative network is unique, with each member having his or her own goals, ideas and perspectives. To ensure the network gets started right, take the time to define the group’s shared vision for the project. This shared vision will guide members as they work with small food retail owners, seek funding from a large foundation, work with teens or educate local elected officials. Help ensure your network’s success by keeping the following ideas in mind.

**Don’t grow too big too fast.** Start small and increase the size of your network over time. Bringing too many organizations together without a clear purpose can be frustrating.

**Ensure network members understand the issues.** Everyone in the group needs to have a clear understanding of the food access issues in your area. Educate the group to the extent possible on the problem and its effects. Having a clear understanding of the issues will make developing your network’s vision and action plan much easier. Some ways to aid members’ understanding: Research the problem. Bring in community leaders or local experts to discuss the topic. Find out about local research or food assessments to which network members have access to avoid duplication of efforts.

**Engage youth and youth-serving organizations.** Youth have a stake in any healthy retail program because often they are one of the biggest consumer groups at small food retailers. Think about inviting youth from nearby high schools, local organizations, youth sports teams and faith-based communities to join the network.

### Stakeholder analysis chart example

Category*	Stakeholder	Contact person: Name, title and contact information	Include in network	As-needed resource	What’s important to this stakeholder	What this stakeholder has to offer
SCH	Winston Elementary School	Eddie Smith, community education coordinator, 355-534-5123, smithe@winston.edu	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students shop at the store after school</li> <li>• School cares about the health of its students</li> <li>• Providing nutrition education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting space</li> <li>• Kitchen that could be used to teach classes</li> <li>• Already provides nutrition ed. to students</li> <li>• Can send info about the program home with students</li> </ul>

A stakeholder analysis helps you identify the people and organizations that should be included in your network and what each has to offer.

### Potential network members

- ▶ Community residents
- ▶ Youth
- ▶ School administrators and teachers
- ▶ Public health agencies and advocates
- ▶ Local elected officials
- ▶ Local government staff
- ▶ Health professionals
- ▶ Nutritionists and dietitians
- ▶ Community health clinics
- ▶ Community recreation centers, YMCAs, YWCAs
- ▶ Media outlets
- ▶ WIC (Womens, Infants and Children Program) clinics
- ▶ Libraries
- ▶ Farmers markets
- ▶ Customers of partner store
- ▶ Owner of partner store
- ▶ Other business owners
- ▶ Grocery professionals from large supermarkets
- ▶ Community garden volunteers
- ▶ Faith-based organizations
- ▶ Economic development agencies
- ▶ Nonprofit organizations
- ▶ Youth-serving organizations
- ▶ Marketing professionals
- ▶ Universities and colleges



**Be dedicated.** Once you or your organization joins the network, be reliable and active in the group's work.

**Celebrate success.** Taking time to celebrate even the smallest victories brings a partnership together.

### Working with youth

Youth and adults benefit by working together. Youth develop leadership skills and obtain valuable experience from working with a group and engaging with the community. Adults gain insight into the youths' perspective on the healthy food access issue, how the lack of access affects them and how to reach them.

Here are a few tips for working successfully with youth.

- ▶ Involve youth in the planning stage so they can play a role in the project's direction.
- ▶ Instead of including just one or two young people, recruit a group of teens to make them feel more comfortable when first joining the group.
- ▶ Let teens help guide the group's understanding of how young people think and feel about the project and how it's being developed.
- ▶ Listen to the teens discuss the issue to gain an understanding of how to best engage their peers, schools and community.
- ▶ Give the youth a role at every meeting.
- ▶ If youth are taking the lead on an activity, be sure to include them on meeting agendas so they can report their progress to the group.



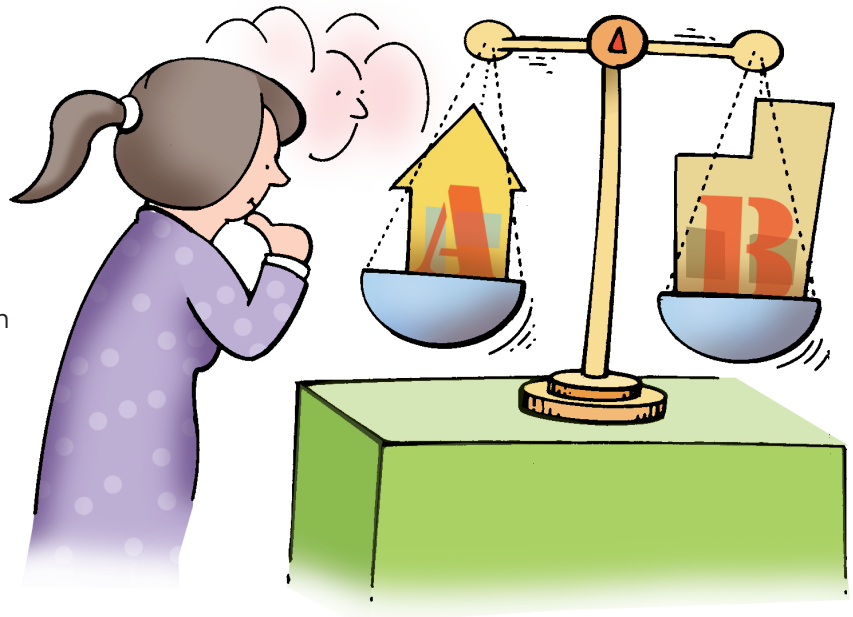
## 4 Partnering with a store

Once you have formed your network by bringing together stakeholders and clearly articulating the network's purpose, it's time to identify and begin working with a small food retailer. Creating a partnership with a store can be very different from creating a partnership with a nonprofit or neighborhood association. Some store owners may not be involved or familiar with many of the organizations in the community. Others may be active members of the chamber of commerce or merchants association. Either way, this partnership will greatly benefit your community as you work together to increase access to healthy foods.

### Selecting a partner store

Some communities have only one grocery or convenience store. If your community has more than one, you need to determine which store would be the best fit for this project. First you need to identify all the stores in the community that sell food. If you haven't shopped in each of the stores, you might do that as part of your assessment. Here are some questions to consider when selecting a store to work with.

- ▶ Which stores in the community sell healthy foods, and which do not?
- ▶ Do food stores in your community promote the healthier options they carry?
- ▶ Where do community members shop regularly? How often do they shop at these stores?
- ▶ Does someone in your network have a relationship with a store owner?
- ▶ Can the store's customer base be easily identified?
- ▶ Is the store well-established and well-known within the community? What is the store's history in the community?
- ▶ Has the store previously participated in community activities?



In addition to considering each store, learn more about the surrounding community. In many urban areas, customers come from within a several-block radius. In rural communities, customers primarily come from within a 10- to 15-mile radius. Beyond that, customers shop in other communities on their way to and from their jobs. To gain a better understanding of the surrounding community, attempt to answer the following questions about the urban or rural community, as appropriate.

### Urban community audit

- ▶ Who lives near the store, mostly seniors, families or young adults?
- ▶ Is public transportation available nearby?
- ▶ Is the housing around the store mostly single-family homes or mostly apartment buildings?
- ▶ Where are the nearest schools and day care centers?

### Rural community audit

- ▶ Who primarily shops at the store?
- ▶ Who lives nearby, mostly seniors, families or young adults?
- ▶ What sort of transportation is available for residents (taxi, church van, etc.)?
- ▶ Where are the nearest schools and child care centers?



### Creating a network-store partnership

A partnership is a formal relationship that involves all parties committing to working cooperatively toward a specified goal. Mutual trust among the partners is crucial. Your community network can help build that trust by communicating often and being consistent with your message and with your support for your partner store.

Your network members may have some understanding of the local healthy food access issues and are passionate about addressing them. Some store owners may never have thought about these issues. Others may have thought about the issues but felt powerless to address them. All store owners are likely to have concerns about whether their stores can meet their bottom line and profit from stocking healthy foods. So, you will need to educate, encourage and foster a relationship with the owner of your partner store. And you will need to be patient and flexible.

Now that your network has identified a store that could potentially improve access to healthy food in your community, it's time to bring your network together to brainstorm how your group can support a partner store and to plan your next steps. See chapter 6 for a guide to establishing your network-store partnership.

# 5 Building community demand

Now that you have identified a partner store, your network needs to use its skills, resources and expertise to support the store in its efforts to provide more healthy foods. That support can come in many forms, from cleaning, painting and display setup; to promoting the store at meetings, in the media and door to door; to providing nutrition education to local residents.

Building demand within the community for the new healthy products is key to the project's success. Increasing the supply of healthy foods, alone, is not enough; carrying products without consumer demand puts the owner's investment at risk. Pace the changes within the store with your network's community outreach and promotion.

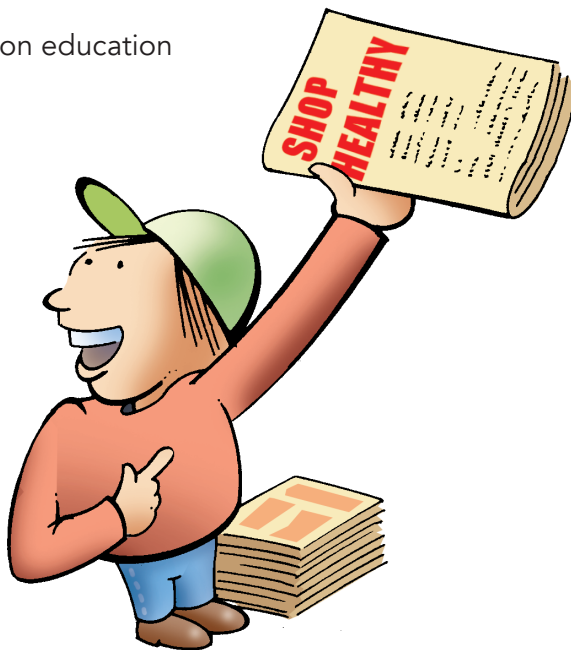
The following activities are some that your network can use to increase demand for healthy items in your community and support your partner store. They are roughly grouped in five categories, though some can fit in more than one category:

- ▶ Strengthening customer loyalty
- ▶ Store support and in-store activities
- ▶ Store promotion and marketing
- ▶ Community outreach and nutrition education
- ▶ Youth-oriented activities

These activities may take place at the store, at a nearby nonprofit or elsewhere in the community. Customize the activities as needed and come up with others that fit your situation and are suitable for your partner store. Use the skills, resources and expertise available through your network to support your partner store and create a healthier community. To keep the partnership strong, remember to communicate regularly with the store owner about your plans.

## Easy ways to promote your partner store

- ▶ Talk about the store at community meetings.
- ▶ Hand out fliers at community events and the local library.
- ▶ Mail leaflets to nearby residents.
- ▶ Hang door hangers or knock on neighbors' doors.
- ▶ Collect email addresses, and send regular updates on the project.
- ▶ Write an article for the local newspaper.
- ▶ Give students information to take home from school.
- ▶ Create a Facebook page to share updates and information.



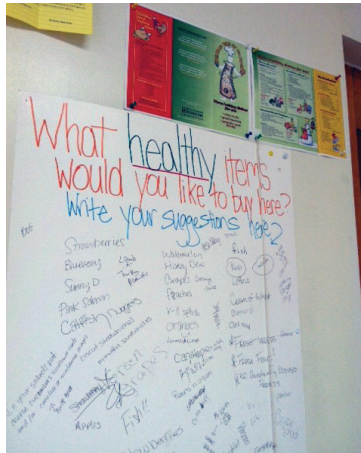


## Strengthening customer loyalty

A simple way to build customer demand is to find out what customers want and stock those items. Besides having the store owner informally ask customers what healthy foods they would like to buy, consider the following techniques for collecting customer feedback.

### Poster board survey.

In a busy location in the store, hang a poster board that says “What healthy items would you like to buy here? Write your suggestions below.” Hang a marker by the sign to make it easy for customers to respond.



**Suggestion box.** Put a suggestion box near the checkout. It can be as simple as a wrapped shoe box with a hole cut in the top. Provide simple suggestion cards and pens so the cards are easy for customers to complete and drop in the box. A template for a suggestion box card that could double as a postcard is available online at <http://extension.missouri.edu/stockhealthy>.

**Postcards.** To allow customers to mail their feedback, the suggestion card could double as a postcard by addressing it to the store on the reverse side. Postcards can also be distributed at community meetings and events. A postcard template is available online at <http://extension.missouri.edu/stockhealthy>.

**Customer survey.** Surveys are good tools for collecting more detailed customer feedback. They take more time than other forms of collecting feedback, but they provide greater detail on key questions. Network members who volunteer a few hours to survey customers in the store will also get to know the store owner better and see how the store operates. A sample customer survey is available on page 39 and can be downloaded from <http://extension.missouri.edu/stockhealthy>.

## Store support and in-store activities

Your network can provide valuable support for your partner store through various hands-on activities, such as cleaning, and customer-oriented activities, such as taste tests.

**Posters and signs.** *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* posters and signs can draw attention to healthy products. (See pages 25–28 of the retailer toolkit or visit <http://extension.missouri.edu/stockhealthy> for posters and signs in English and Spanish.) Print and possibly laminate some of the posters and signs for your partner store. Encourage the store owner to use the posters and signs, and help the owner identify the best places to hang them.

### Make choosing healthy easy

Research shows that

- ▶ signs,
- ▶ posters and
- ▶ shelf talkers

make the healthy choice the easy choice for customers.

**Shelf talkers.** Also known as point-of-decision prompts, shelf talkers are small tags that hang on a shelf directly beside or below a healthy product and provide information about why the product is a healthy choice. Printable *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* shelf talkers are available in English and Spanish from <http://extension.missouri.edu/stockhealthy>. To help with placement of shelf



talkers, the top flaps provide information about the best locations for each. Help your partner store owner by printing shelf talkers to be hung at the store. If possible, have them laminated so they will last longer.

To ensure laminated shelf talkers will fold correctly, be sure to have them scored or folded before they are laminated.



University of Missouri Extension nutrition and health education specialists Linda Rellergert and Mary Wissmann holding a cooking demonstration at a community event.

**Tastings or cooking demonstrations.** Many customers like to sample a new product or produce item before buying it. In-store tastings and cooking demonstrations are a perfect way to give customers the opportunity to taste new products and learn new recipes. Be sure to check with your local health department to find out if you will need a permit to hold this activity. Once you have approval, check out some of the **Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy** recipes at <http://extension.missouri.edu/stockhealthy>.



**Community garden partnership.** Many communities have one or more community gardens. A garden can be a great partner for a retailer focused on selling healthy foods. Local gardens can become suppliers of certain fresh produce, honey and more.

**Store cleanup.** Maintaining a clean and attractive store is important to both the store owner and the community. People tend to frequent stores that look safe and clean. Suggest this activity once you've established a good relationship with the store owner. Plan the cleanup for a time when the store is not busy. Remember to always ask the store owner permission before removing advertising, rearranging store merchandise or throwing things out.

**Landscaping.** The first impression a passerby has of any business is based on how it looks on the outside. Planting flowerbeds, creating window boxes or placing large planters on each side of the store entrance will have a huge effect on the store exterior's appearance. If you have a green thumb, offer to take care of the flowers for the owner. Such an offer will show your commitment to the project and ensure that the flowers are well cared for.

**Mural.** If your partner store has a blank exterior wall that could be brightened up, a mural may be the perfect solution. A mural that promotes healthy eating and active living will reinforce to the community the changes in the store. Ask a network member, a local artist or an art teacher from a nearby school to help develop the design, identify costs and research possible funding sources. Murals are also a great way to engage youth.

**Bike rack.** Physical activity and healthy eating go together. To encourage both, install a bike rack outside your partner store so customers will have a safe place to lock their bikes while they shop.



## Store promotion and marketing

Promoting the store and its healthy changes throughout your community will make more residents aware that healthy foods are available nearby. Discuss past marketing efforts with the store owner, including what worked and what didn't. Then work with the owner to develop creative and attractive marketing materials, including an online presence if possible. Using a consistent message across several media is the best way to ensure you reach a wide audience.

**Local media.** Inform local TV, radio and newspapers of your network's partnership with the store and how you are working together to increase the availability of healthy foods in the community. Send them media advisories with the who, what, when, where and why of any community event or outreach effort in which the store or network is involved (see page 41). Here are some other ways you can work with the media:

- ▶ Write an article for the local paper.
- ▶ Write a press release to promote your network and partnership with a local store (see page 41).
- ▶ Assign a network member as the spokesperson who will speak to the media on your project's behalf.
- ▶ Partner with a local radio station, and invite them to broadcast from the store or at a community event.



### Qualities of a catchy flier or ad

- ▶ Bright colors
- ▶ Bold headline
- ▶ Photos or illustrations
- ▶ Small amount of text

Remember to include the store's name, address, phone number and hours, and to mention the healthy changes the store is making.

**Reusable grocery bags.** Create reusable grocery bags with your partner store's name, address and phone number, if funding allows. Use the bags as door prizes at meetings or distribute them at community events.

**Fliers and door hangers.** Distribute fliers or door hangers about the healthy changes in your partner store to homes and businesses in the area and at community events. Good places to post fliers include community bulletin boards in stores, libraries, beauty salons, barber shops, banks and child care centers. Door hangers are best printed on card stock and have a cutout that allows them to be hung on residents' front door handles. A *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* door hanger template is available at <http://extension.missouri.edu/stockhealthy>.

**Newsletter advertising.** Some local churches and community groups may let your network run a free advertisement about your partner store's healthy changes in their newsletter as a community service. If they don't allow advertising, ask if they would run a brief story to inform their members about the healthy changes the store is making. Stress how these changes benefit the entire community.

## Building community demand

**Social media and the Internet.** Many people today get much of their information online, so creating an online presence for the network and your partner store can be beneficial for the project. You must consider your audience when deciding which social media to use so you will know how best to reach them. You must also consider the time and dedication social media requires. To keep readers interested, the content needs to be fresh, on topic and updated frequently. Here are some possible ways to connect with your stakeholders online.

- ▶ Develop a Facebook page for the network to share updates, link to related articles and engage new partners.
- ▶ Develop a Facebook page for the store to promote itself, update customers on new healthy food offerings, list sale items and share recipes.
- ▶ Create a blog where network members can regularly post narrative updates about the project's progress, or contribute articles to related blogs.

- ▶ Create a website about the project or add information about the project to one of the participating organization's existing website. Have all of the participating organizations link to the site.
- ▶ Sign up customers and community members for an email or text message list. Send them regular messages featuring new healthy products, recipes, store updates and invitations to community events.

**Become a regular customer.** Support the store by buying snacks there for your group's regular meetings or events. Let attendees know the food came from your partner store by displaying a small sign that has the store's name and owner's name. Your partner store may also be willing to donate food or drinks for your meeting or community outreach activities to show support for the work you are doing.



## Community outreach and nutrition education

Many people have misconceptions about healthy foods, including their preparation time, cost and taste. Nutrition education and other outreach efforts can help dispel those ideas. Reach out to the community to let them know that healthy foods are now available locally, to encourage them to frequent your partner store, and to educate them about the benefits of healthy eating. Consider your specific situation and the resources available through your network to determine which outreach activities will work best in your community. Here are a few possibilities.

**Community survey.** The best way to find out how community members feel about a particular store is to ask them. A community survey is a useful tool for learning residents' reasons for shopping at a particular store, shopping habits, demand for healthy products, and views on how the store

can be a community asset. The customer survey mentioned previously is for use inside the store to capture feedback from current customers. The community survey is for use at other locations, such as the library, recreation centers, community festivals, WIC clinics and community meetings.

Ask network members to survey community members at a variety of locations. If your network includes youth, conducting surveys would be a great activity for them and an opportunity for them to learn from others. Sample customer and community surveys are available on pages 39 and 42, respectively.

**Poster board survey.** Another way to learn about community members' preferences is to hang a poster board or flip chart paper on the wall in a community location. At the top of paper, write "What healthy items would you like to buy at [name of your partner store]? Write your suggestions below." This approach won't garner as much information as a survey, but it is an easy way for community members to share their responses to one question. After you've collected this information, sit down with your partner store owner and identify the top healthy suggestions.

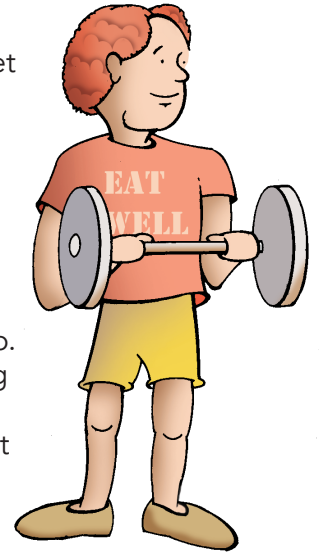
**Community cookbook.** Food brings people together. Ask community members to share their favorite healthy recipes, and create a community cookbook. Sell the cookbook as a fundraiser, or give it to community members as a gift. Host a potluck to promote the cookbook, and invite neighbors to bring their favorite healthy dish to share.

**Health fair, block party or community festival.** Large community celebrations, such as health fairs, block parties and community festivals, bring residents and families together in a fun atmosphere to listen to music, play games and learn about resources in their community. Providing services such as high blood pressure screenings is a great way to engage your community's hospital or health clinic while offering a free service to community members. Community-based organizations and nonprofits can distribute information about their programs. To promote your healthy retail project, include a cooking demonstration, distribute information about the project, or have your partner store set up a promotional booth at the event.

**Mural.** Identify a place in the neighborhood appropriate for a healthy living mural. Possible locations include the side of a prominent building, at a community garden or farmers market or on an exterior wall of your partner store. Recruit a

local artist or art teacher to design the mural, or sponsor a contest for the design. A paint-by-number mural is ideal for engaging more people, especially kids, in actually painting part of the design. Residents will take great pride in this project.

**Physical activities.** Organize a 5K race or a community hike to get people active. Some people like to do physical activities in groups, so activities like these can bring people together and promote a healthy lifestyle. If you'd like to organize a regular activity, form a community walking club. Recruit participants by hanging fliers at the store, registering residents at a community event or posting details on social media. Provide branded T-shirts, if possible.



**Nutrition education classes.** Enlist the help of local nutritionists, dietitians, hospitals, community health clinics, public health agencies, nonprofits or universities in providing formal community education. They may be able to provide classes on disease management, nutrition, healthy cooking and ways to adopt healthier habits. Some organizations may have the facilities to teach hands-on healthy cooking classes, too.



University of Missouri Extension nutrition and health education specialist Linda Rellergert teaching a nutrition class.



## Youth-oriented activities

Youth are one of the biggest consumer groups at small food retailers before and after school, so it's important that your healthy food project reach out to them. In addition to considering the activities suggested below, be sure to engage the youth in your network in coming up with ideas about how to reach their peers.

**Junior chef competition.** Hold a junior chef competition for teens. Pick an item, such as a sandwich or snack, and have each team develop a healthy recipe. Require that teams purchase their ingredients at your partner store. Have community leaders or area chefs serve as judges.



The Forest Park Southeast Healthy Neighborhood Store Team held a junior chef competition in which teams competed to make the tastiest healthy wrap.



**Poster contest.** Engage a youth-serving organization or nearby school in a healthy eating, active living poster contest. Hang the winning posters at your partner store. Arrange with the store owner for a time when all of the posters can be on display throughout the store so the youth and their families can see them displayed in public. Also, ask the store owner if some of the posters can be hung in place of old posters and advertisements of unhealthy items such as alcohol, energy drinks and high-calorie snacks.

**Video or photo contest.** Kids today are very tech savvy, so consider engaging them in a video or photo contest. Many teens have smartphones with cameras. Select a healthy living theme for youth to photograph or interview residents about. Ideas include barriers to healthy eating and active living in the community; examples of how community members are staying active; and sources of fresh foods in the community, such as farmers markets, community gardens or individual residents' gardens.

# 6 Getting started

This chapter is a guide to getting started on increasing access to healthy foods in your community. It suggests plans for the first few network meetings and store visits. From the beginning, network members will have plenty of opportunities to engage: brainstorming outreach activities, meeting with partner store owners, conducting store assessments, collecting community and customer surveys, and planning and implementing projects and activities.

The first network meeting is an opportunity to get to know your fellow stakeholders and network members. During this meeting, the group will share information, discuss the food access issues in your community, and identify a potential partner store. This meeting should include an overview of the *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* program and available resources.

Later network meetings will involve reporting on store visits, compiling survey data, brainstorming ideas for activities and projects your network could implement to support your partner store, and drafting action plans to ensure activities go smoothly.



## Successful meeting pointers

- ▶ Make sure each meeting has a clear purpose.
- ▶ Always prepare and use an agenda no matter the size of the group. Stick to the agenda to keep your meeting on track and ensure you get through all of your business.
- ▶ Start and end on time.
- ▶ Assign a stakeholder to take notes at each meeting.
- ▶ Send out minutes within a week of the meeting to keep everyone updated and remind the group what needs to be done.

## Tips for developing a strong network-store relationship

- ▶ Visit the store regularly, and build your relationship with the store owner at each visit.
- ▶ Work with the store owner to identify the strategies suggested in the toolkits that will work for the store.
- ▶ Help the store owner make changes when appropriate and feasible. Assure the owner that you will be working at his or her pace.
- ▶ Promote the store and its healthy changes throughout the community.
- ▶ Celebrate each success, whether big or small.


## Network meeting 1

### Before the meeting

- ▶ Two to three weeks ahead of time, send the link to the *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* website, <http://extension.missouri.edu/stockhealthy>, to the stakeholders you are inviting to the meeting so they can preview the resources. Ask them to pay special attention to chapter 4 in the community toolkit, and to come to the meeting with a list of potential partner stores.
- ▶ Research food access issues. Bring results to the meeting to discuss.
- ▶ Prepare the agenda and send to network members one week before the meeting.

### During the meeting

- ▶ Have members introduce themselves and state why the issue of food access is important to them.
- ▶ Identify any stakeholders who are not represented and determine what community members might be able to fill the void.
- ▶ Discuss the research findings about the food access in your community. Ask if members know of other organizations that have completed community assessments or have other relevant data.
- ▶ Identify your group's purpose for working with a small food retailer to increase access to healthy, affordable foods. Future agenda items should always support this purpose.
- ▶ If your community has more than one small food retailer, ask network members to identify the top few they feel would be a strong partner based on their review of chapter 4. Narrow down the list to two stores everyone agrees might make a good partner. By identifying two potential partners now, you save time if the first owner you approach is not interested in participating.
- ▶ **Network-store partnership proposal.** Review the network-store partnership proposal on page 44 in preparation for the first store visit. Decide who will be the contact person.
- ▶ Select two network members to visit the store and introduce the *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* program to the owner.
- ▶ Share and begin reviewing both toolkits.
- ▶ Schedule next meeting. Ask members to review chapter 5 in the community toolkit in preparation for the meeting.

 **Tip: Keep the group visiting the store small so as not to overwhelm the store or intimidate the owner.**

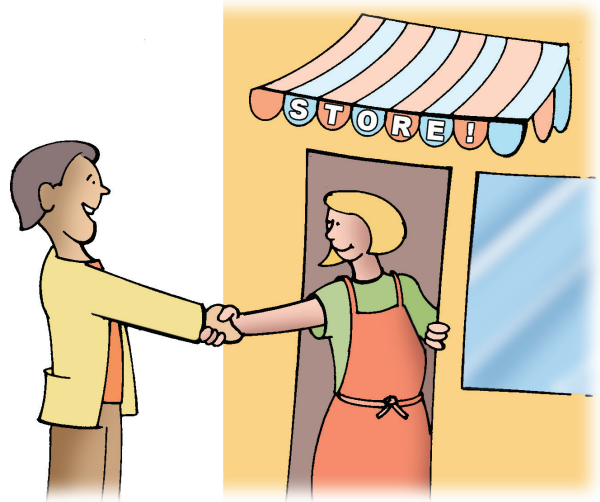
### After the meeting: Preparing for store visit 1 and network meeting 2

- ▶ Add the contact person's name, phone number and email address to the network-store partnership proposal as decided at the meeting. Print two copies to take with you on the first store visit.
- ▶ Read chapter 5 in the community toolkit and start identifying ideas that excite you, and review chapter 5 in the retailer toolkit in preparation for working with the store owner.
- ▶ Send meeting minutes to network members within a week.

## Store visit 1

Plan your first store visit for nonpeak business hours when the owner is more likely to be available. Small food retailers often have a breakfast rush from 7 to 9 a.m., a lunch rush from noon to 1 p.m. and, if near a school, an afterschool rush from 2:30 to 4 p.m.

This visit will be brief. It is just an opportunity to introduce yourself, the network and the *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* program. If the owner is interested, you will set a time to talk in more detail later.



- ▶ Introduce yourself to an employee who is available, and ask if the store owner is available.
  - ▶ *If the owner is not available, find out the best day and time to reach him or her so that you can return to the store then.*
  - ▶ *If the store owner is available, let him or her know you are a regular customer of the store, if you are, and an active community leader.*
- ▶ Share the network-store partnership proposal with the store owner.
- ▶ Cover these key messages during this visit:
  - ▶ *Tell the owner why you are there — to ask him or her to help increase the availability of healthy foods in the community. Explain that many people in the community must travel a good distance to reach a full-service supermarket and that having more healthy foods available right here in the community would benefit everyone.*
  - ▶ *Tell the owner about the important role he or she can play in increasing access to healthy foods — by making small changes to the store’s inventory, such as selling more fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables or low-fat dairy products.*
  - ▶ *Briefly describe the community network and assure the owner that its members will support the healthy changes he or she makes and will encourage others in the community to buy the new healthy items. Some ways a network might support the store include surveying customers and community members, and organizing activities at the store and in the community.*
- ▶ Ask the owner if he or she is interested in learning more about the project.
  - ▶ **IF SO,** *ask when would be a good time for you to come back and talk about working together. Explain that at the next meeting you’ll share some resources and more information about the project to help him or her determine whether to participate. Tell the owner how important the store is to the community, thank the owner for his or her interest, and tell him or her you look forward to your next meeting.*
  - ▶ **IF NOT,** *simply thank the owner for taking the time to listen to your concerns. Don’t give up. Store owners are very busy running their businesses, and that has to be their priority. If your network has identified another potential partner, visit that store before the next network meeting.*

**Tip:**  
Compliment the owner on the store.


## Network meeting 2

### Before the meeting

- ▶ Prepare the agenda and send to network members one week before the meeting.

### During the meeting

- ▶ Report on each store visit.
- ▶ If the store owner was not interested, did you visit the second store on your list? If you cannot identify another potential partner or your community doesn't have another store, consider other ideas for closing the food gap in your community through working with farmers markets, community gardens, community supported agriculture (CSA) or food pantries.
- ▶ If the store owner was interested, ask members what ideas in chapter 5 about building community demand excited them. Brainstorm other possible activities your network might implement to promote your partner store.
- ▶ Determine which of these activities your network could realistically implement.
- ▶ Schedule next meeting.



**Tip:** Having a few ideas of potential activities your network could organize will help the store owner better envision what the network can do to promote the store and share information about healthy eating.

### After the meeting: Preparing for store visit 2 and network meeting 3

- ▶ Print sample posters, signs and shelf talkers to take on next store visit. These items are shown on page 25–28 of the retailer toolkit, and printable PDFs are available from <http://extension.missouri.edu/stockhealthy>. Having these in hand will help the owner better understand their uses.
- ▶ Print or obtain a *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy: Retailer Toolkit* for the store owner.
- ▶ Send meeting minutes to network members within one week.



## Store visit 2

This, your first formal meeting with the store owner, is an opportunity to further share your goal of increasing the availability of healthy, affordable foods in your community and developing a partnership with the store.

**Tip:** Assure the owner that this project will move at a pace he or she is comfortable with and that the network will not try to rush big changes.

- Ask the following general questions about the owner and the store's inventory. At your next store visit, you'll conduct a more in-depth interview with the owner.

How long have you owned or operated the store? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your top-selling food items? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are your top-selling nonfood items? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in selling healthier foods? If so, which ones? \_\_\_\_\_

(See healthy food lists on pages 10 and 11 of *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy: Community Toolkit*.)

\_\_\_\_\_

What would you hope to gain by partnering with our network? (Examples: new customers or help with marketing) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How can we best help you offer and sell healthier foods? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Present the *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy: Retailer Toolkit* as a resource with information on identifying healthful food items, guidelines for handling and storing produce, and tips for displaying and merchandising healthy foods and promoting the store in the community. Encourage the owner to review it before your next meeting, if possible.
- Share ideas of possible activities you identified at network meeting 2. Present the posters, signs and shelf talkers you printed, and point out these resources and the suggestions for their use in the retailer toolkit.
- Schedule another meeting to answer any questions the owner might have, review and sign a partnership memorandum of understanding, and discuss ways the network and store could work together.

**Tip:** Buy something. By doing so, you're showing your commitment to supporting the store.

## Network meeting 3

### Before the meeting

- ▶ Prepare the agenda and send to network members one week before the meeting.

**Tip:** The store assessment is an ideal opportunity to involve a few network members who have not yet visited the partner store.

### During the meeting

- ▶ Report on the most recent store visit. Share any questions or comments the store owner had that you found interesting.
- ▶ **MOU.** A memorandum of understanding (MOU), although not required, is recommended. An MOU represents an agreement that holds both parties accountable for the project's success. It reminds both parties of what they agreed to do and should be referred to periodically with the store owner to be sure that both parties are meeting their commitments. When either party is not fulfilling its commitments, the MOU can be used to encourage compliance.  
  
Draft a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the partnership. (See sample MOU on page 45 for ideas.) Determine the network and store responsibilities, the length of the partnership, and who can sign the agreement on behalf of the network.
- ▶ **Store owner interview.** At the next store visit, you will be interviewing the store owner, using the form on pages 46–47, to gain a better understanding of how the business operates. Review the interview form and make a list of any additional questions the network would like asked.
- ▶ **Store assessment.** After the next store visit, it's time for network members to assess the store from the customer's perspective using the store assessment form on pages 48–49. Identify two to four people to conduct an assessment. Each assessment can be completed alone or in pairs so as not to overwhelm the store. When the members completing the assessment visit the store, they should introduce themselves to the owner and let him or her know what they will be doing and that the network will share the information at its next meeting and use it to guide its activities.
- ▶ Schedule next meeting.

### After the meeting: Preparing for store visit 3 and network meeting 4

- ▶ Prepare the MOU as agreed at the meeting, and print two copies to take on your next store visit.
- ▶ Print a copy of the store owner interview form (pages 46–47) and the list of the network's additional questions, if any, to take on your next store visit.
- ▶ Ensure that each network member who will be doing a store assessment has a copy of the form (pages 48–49).
- ▶ Send meeting minutes to network members within one week.

## Store visit 3

Begin this meeting by answering any questions and discussing any concerns the store owner has about the project. Then ask if he or she is ready to partner with the network to make healthy, affordable foods available in the community. If the answer is yes, it's time to get busy. The purpose of the rest of this meeting is to formalize the partnership and assess the current state of the store.

### **Memorandum of understanding**

Explain to the store owner that a memorandum of understanding (MOU) represents an agreement that holds both parties accountable for the project's success. It reminds both parties of what they agreed to do and should be referred to periodically to be sure that both parties are meeting their commitments.

Review the MOU with store owner. Then the owner and the network's authorized representative each sign two copies of the MOU so the network and the store owner will each have an original for their records.

### **Store assessment**

Before talking with the store owner about changes (or potential changes), you need to assess the current state of the store. You will do this from the store owner's perspective and from a customer's perspective.

- ▶ **Store owner interview.** Ask the owner the questions on the store owner interview form on pages 46–47 to learn more about the challenges and successes of running the store.
- ▶ **Store assessment.** Tell the owner that sometime before your next meeting, a few network members will be assessing the store from a customer's perspective using the store assessment form on pages 48–49.

Explain that the information gathered on both these forms will be useful when discussing changes or improvements to the store inventory, layout and appearance, and when deciding how best to promote the store in the community. Tell the owner that you will bring this information to your next meeting, when together you will define next steps.

Also, let the owner know that your network will soon begin conducting customer and community surveys and that you will periodically provide a summary of the survey results. You may want to bring copies of the surveys to share with the owner at your next visit.

### Checklist for store visit 3

- MOU signed by owner and authorized network representative
- Store owner interview completed
- Next meeting scheduled

## Network meeting 4

### Before the meeting

- ▶ Prepare the agenda and send to network members one week before the meeting.

### During the meeting

- ▶ Report on the most recent store visit. Share the results of the store owner interview.
- ▶ Ask the members who completed a store assessment to report on their experience and findings.
- ▶ Together, the findings from the store owner interview and store assessments will be crucial to the identification of product offerings, product display, in-store promotion and strengthening customer loyalty suggestions you will present at your next store visit.
- ▶ Brainstorm ideas in the following four categories: product offerings, product display, in-store promotion and strengthening customer loyalty. Compare your ideas to the suggestions listed in the toolkits on the pages indicated below, and add any ideas that were missing from your list:
  - ▶ *Product offerings: pages 10–11 and 33 of community toolkit and pages 7–8 of the retailer toolkit.*
  - ▶ *Product display: page 33 of the community toolkit and pages 29–30 of the retailer toolkit.*
  - ▶ *In-store promotion: pages 19–20 of the community toolkit and pages 24–28 of the retailer toolkit.*
  - ▶ *Strengthening customer loyalty: page 19 of the community toolkit and pages 9–10 of the retailer toolkit.*
- ▶ **Customer and community surveys.** Feedback from customers and community residents is also valuable and should be used to guide decisions about activities to implement. Identify two to four network members to survey customers as they shop, using the customer survey on pages 39–40. Identify others to use the community survey on pages 42–43 to survey community residents — including those who have never been to the store — at community meetings, farmers markets, libraries and other public places and events.
- ▶ Schedule next meeting.

### After the meeting: Preparing for store visit 4 and network meeting 5

- ▶ Organize the store assessment findings and a list of initial suggestions and recommendations in preparation for discussing them with the store owner.
- ▶ Print blank copies of the customer and community surveys to show the owner, if desired.
- ▶ Send meeting minutes to network members within one week.

## Store visit 4

At this visit, you will discuss the store assessment findings, share suggestions and recommendations, and listen to the store owner's ideas. You will need to be flexible. The owner may be highly committed to this project but may not feel ready to stock large quantities of fresh produce or to implement some of your suggestions. Be respectful of the owner's feelings and remember that change takes time. You may want to start the conversation by asking the store owner which category — product offerings, product display, in-store promotion or strengthening customer loyalty — he or she would like to start with. Share the suggestions in the chart below for a more healthful inventory and remind the store owner that the *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy: Retailer Toolkit* contains even more ideas.

If you brought copies of the customer and community surveys, show them to the owner.

Invite the store owner to attend a future network meeting to meet the network members and learn in more detail about your plans for activities and classes to promote the store and nutrition education.

Product offerings	Product display	In-store promotion	Customer loyalty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Bottled water and 100% juices</li> <li>▶ Healthy snack items: baked chips, low-salt pretzels, low-fat yogurt</li> <li>▶ Whole grains: 100% whole-wheat bread, brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, oatmeal</li> <li>▶ Canned and packaged foods low in fat, sugar and salt</li> <li>▶ Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables</li> <li>▶ Low-fat dairy: 1% or nonfat milk, yogurt and cheese</li> <li>▶ A healthy sandwich or meal combo – with a piece of fruit and water – if store has a deli counter</li> <li>▶ Grab-and-go fruit and veggie snacks: cut-up fruit in containers or vegetable sticks with low-fat dip</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Promote fresh produce by displaying it on shelves or in baskets near the front of the store. If it's in the far back corner, customers may not know the store carries it.</li> <li>▶ Display produce next to the checkout.</li> <li>▶ Move sugary cereals to the top shelves so they are not at children's eye level.</li> <li>▶ Create a healthy end cap or a healthy shelf near the front of the store to highlight the available healthy foods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Promote healthy foods and beverages using signage on shelves and refrigerators, including shelf talkers, refrigerator decals, door signs, stickers, magnets, price tags and posters.</li> <li>▶ Offer recipes that use fruits and vegetables in the produce section.</li> <li>▶ Remove product advertising from the entry door. A clean door is attractive and inviting to customers. However, be sure to advertise that you accept EBT and/or WIC.</li> <li>▶ Distribute reusable shopping bags with your store's name and logo and a statement such as "We stock healthy so you can shop healthy" to encourage healthy purchases and repeat customers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Put a suggestion box near the checkout. Provide simple suggestion cards and pens so customers can easily complete cards and drop in the box.</li> <li>▶ Hang a poster board that says "What healthy items would you like to buy here? Write your suggestions below." Hang a marker by the sign to make it easy for customers to respond.</li> <li>▶ Sign up customers and community members for an email list. Send them regular messages featuring new healthy products, recipes, store updates and invitations to community events.</li> </ul>



**Did you know that bananas are the biggest impulse buy in supermarkets? Display bananas near the checkout in addition to in the produce section to increase sales.**



## Network meeting 5

### Before the meeting

- ▶ Prepare the agenda and send to network members one week before the meeting.

### During the meeting

- ▶ Introduce the store owner, if he or she attends the meeting.
- ▶ Report on the most recent store visit. Have the owner, if present, share the changes he or she would like to make.
- ▶ Select a project or activity to focus on first. Develop an action plan using the chart on page 50. An action plan helps you outline all the steps that will need to be taken and determine how they will be completed so that your group can meet its goal. An action plan typically lists who is going to do what, by when and in what order, and what additional information or resources are needed to complete each task.
- ▶ If the store owner has requested help with some of the changes, develop a plan to accomplish them. For example, if the owner wishes to move sugary cereals to a higher shelf, ask for a volunteer to help and set a date to make this change.

<b>Project or activity:</b> Health fair and program launch in the park near the partner store			
<b>Activity or task</b>	<b>Who is responsible? Who will help?</b>	<b>Additional resources or information needed</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Complete the park permit to reserve pavilion	Alison	\$50 check to pay the permit fee	April 10
Distribute health fair door hanger to 200 homes	Thomas		April 25

- ▶ Ask for volunteers to continue making brief, periodic store visits to check on progress, praise the store owner on changes and encourage him or her to make more.
- ▶ Schedule next meeting.

### After the meeting

- ▶ Send meeting minutes to network members within one week.

### Moving forward

- ▶ Regular meetings of the network will keep people engaged throughout the project and for the time specified in the MOU. Continue to expect network members to take the action steps specified in your plan as you move forward to meet your goal and to report on their progress at each meeting.
- ▶ Regular communication with the store owner will ensure the owner continues to feel the support of the network and will provide the network with continual feedback on the store's progress.



#### **Tip: Celebrate accomplishments.**

- **Note them at network meetings.**
- **Praise or inform the store owner about them.**
- **Write a press release and submit with a photo.**
- **Mention at a chamber of commerce meeting and in an article for the chamber's newsletter.**
- **Ask the mayor or another elected official to have a photo taken at the store highlighting changes or new offerings.**
- **Make short presentations at meetings of local service and civic groups, such as Lions, Optimists and Rotary clubs.**

# 7 Resources

## Research

---

Access to Healthy Food and Why It Matters: [http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media\\_items/access-to-healthy-food.original.pdf](http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/access-to-healthy-food.original.pdf)

Green for Greens: Finding Public Financing for Healthy Food Retail: <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/green-for-greens>

Healthy Food Access Portal: <http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org>

Healthy Food Financing Handbook: [http://foodtrust-prod.punkave.net/uploads/media\\_items/hffhandbookfinal.original.pdf](http://foodtrust-prod.punkave.net/uploads/media_items/hffhandbookfinal.original.pdf)

Healthy Food, Healthy Communities: Promising Strategies to Improve Access to Fresh, Healthy Food and Transform Communities: <http://www.healthycornerstores.org/healthy-food-healthy-communities-promising-strategies-to-improve-access-to-fresh-healthy-food-and-transform-communities>

Health on the Shelf: <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/health-on-the-shelf>

Neighborhood Groceries: New Access to Healthy Food in Low Income Communities: <http://cfpa.net/GeneralNutrition/CFPAPublications/NeighborhoodGroceries-FullReport-2003.PDF>

PolicyLink: <http://policylink.org>

Research brief: A Snapshot of Healthy Corner Store Initiatives, National League of Cities Sustainable Cities Institute: [http://www.sustainablecitiesinstitute.org/Documents/SCI/Report\\_Guide/ResearchBrief\\_HealthyCornerStoresSCI\\_Final1.pdf](http://www.sustainablecitiesinstitute.org/Documents/SCI/Report_Guide/ResearchBrief_HealthyCornerStoresSCI_Final1.pdf)

Strategies That Work: Real Solutions to Community Food Problems: [http://www.hartfordfood.org/publications/healthy\\_retailers08.pdf](http://www.hartfordfood.org/publications/healthy_retailers08.pdf)

## Program examples from across the U.S.

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Baltimore Healthy Stores: <http://healthystores.org/projects>

Champions for Change (California): <http://cachampionsforchange.cdph.ca.gov>

D.C. Healthy Corner Store Program: <http://dchunger.org/projects/cornerstore.html>

Healthy Corner Stores for Healthy New Orleans Neighborhoods: [http://www.healthycornerstores.org/wp-content/uploads/resources/NOLA\\_Healthy\\_Corner\\_Stores\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://www.healthycornerstores.org/wp-content/uploads/resources/NOLA_Healthy_Corner_Stores_Toolkit.pdf)

Healthy Corner Stores Network: <http://healthycornerstores.org>

Healthy Foods Here: Produce Manual and Produce Marketing Guide (Seattle): <https://catalyst.uw.edu/workspace/skt8/14501/101408>

Minneapolis Healthy Corner Store Project: [http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/oshii/docs/Mpls\\_Healthy\\_Corner\\_Store.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/oshii/docs/Mpls_Healthy_Corner_Store.pdf)

Sell Healthy Guide (Philadelphia): [http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media\\_items/phcsn-sell-healthy-guide.original.pdf](http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/phcsn-sell-healthy-guide.original.pdf)

Shop Healthy NYC: How to Adopt a Shop Guide: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/pan/adopt-a-shop-guide.pdf>

Shop Healthy NYC: Implementation Guide:  
[http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/  
pan/shop-healthy-implementation-guide.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/pan/shop-healthy-implementation-guide.pdf)

Snackin' Fresh: [http://www.thefoodtrust.org/php/  
SnackinFresh](http://www.thefoodtrust.org/php/SnackinFresh)

Spokane Healthy Corner Store Project: A Toolkit  
for Neighborhood Organizers and Storeowners:  
[http://www.srhd.org/documents/PA\\_N/Spokane-  
Healthy-Corner-Store-Toolkit-Final.docx](http://www.srhd.org/documents/PA_N/Spokane-Healthy-Corner-Store-Toolkit-Final.docx)

St. Louis Healthy Corner Store Resource  
Guide: [http://extension.missouri.edu/stlouis/  
healthycornerstore.aspx](http://extension.missouri.edu/stlouis/healthycornerstore.aspx)





# Appendices

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# Stakeholder analysis

Category*	Stakeholder	Contact person: Name, title and contact information	Include in network	As-needed resource	What's important to this stakeholder	What this stakeholder has to offer

\*Categories:

BUS – business, chamber of commerce  
 COM – community leader, volunteer, neighborhood association, block unit  
 CUST – current customer  
 FM/CG – farmers market, community garden

GOV – local government, policymaker, elected official  
 HLTH – nutrition educator, dietitian, public health (examples: public health department, health professional, hospital, clinic)

NPO – nonprofit organization  
 SCH – school  
 YSO – youth-serving organization (examples: 4-H club, day care center)

OTH – other community resource (examples: faith-based organization, library, recreation center, YMCA)

# Customer survey

Use this form to survey customers at the store to learn more about shopping decisions and habits. Either ask individual customers the questions, or provide pens and space for the customers to complete the survey on their own.

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_ Store name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Where do you and your family get your food? (Check all that apply.)

- Grocery store or supermarket (Hy-Vee, Shop 'n Save, Country Mart)
- Large store (Walmart, Target)
- Corner/convenience store (7-Eleven, Casey's, Corner Market)
- Drug store (Walgreens, CVS)
- Dollar store
- Mom and pop store
- Farmers market
- Food pantry, church or community center
- Other place: \_\_\_\_\_

2. How far away do you live from this store? \_\_\_\_ blocks **or** \_\_\_\_ miles **or** \_\_\_\_ minutes

3. How do you usually get to this store? (Check one.)

- Walk
- Bike
- Bus
- Your car
- Borrowed car
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. How often do you shop at this store? (Check one.)

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- A few times a year
- Never

5. Why do you shop at this store? (Check all that apply.)

- It is close to where I live.
- It is close to my work.
- I meet my friends here.
- It has good service.
- It has good prices.
- It has good quality.
- It has a good selection.
- It has choices I need or want.
- I know the owner.
- It is clean.
- It has credit.
- It accepts EBT/food stamps or WIC.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. What do you buy most from this store? Please be specific (examples: fruit, juice, chips, nonfood items).

---

---

---

7. Do you buy dairy products here? Yes / No

8. Do you buy fruits here? Yes / No

9. Do you buy vegetables here? Yes / No

10. What would it take for you to buy more of your groceries at this store? (Check all that apply.)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I already buy most of my groceries here   | <input type="checkbox"/> Better advertising of healthy items (I didn't know they sell healthy items) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better prices   | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs to accept EBT/food stamps or WIC                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better quality  | <input type="checkbox"/> Nicer looking exterior  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More healthy snack options<br>(examples: baked chips, nuts)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Being able to suggest the items I'd like to buy here                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More general grocery items<br>(examples: whole-grain bread, low-fat dairy, canned and frozen produce) | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better service  | <input type="checkbox"/> Better safety   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaner store   | <input type="checkbox"/> Different store hours   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More choices  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

11. What would help you buy more fruits and vegetables in general? (Select one to three ideas.)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-store specials/more value for the money   | <input type="checkbox"/> Nice displays  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free samples to taste  | <input type="checkbox"/> More variety   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having recipes available at the store  | <input type="checkbox"/> More precut, prewashed fruits and vegetables available |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seeing in-store cooking demonstrations   | <input type="checkbox"/> Locally grown fruits and vegetables                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having a nutritionist or dietitian available to answer questions                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having nutrition information displayed by the food items that are considered healthy | _____   |

12. On a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "extremely," how important should healthy eating be? \_\_\_\_\_

13. On a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being "never" and 10 being "at every meal," how often are you taking steps towards healthy eating? \_\_\_\_\_

**Note, this section is optional.**

**SO WE CAN BEST USE YOUR ANSWERS, PLEASE ALSO TELL US:**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Home ZIP code: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people you live with: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of children under 18 you live with: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you or does someone you live with own a car in working condition? Yes / No

Do you or does someone you live with receive or use EBT/food stamps or WIC? (Check all that apply.)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> WIC   | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EBT/food stamps   | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, no one in my home receives food stamps or WIC benefits. |   |

Any other comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your time and participation!**

# Press releases and media advisories

A press release is a comprehensive, in-depth story that is written just like a news article. It is used to report on something that has already happened. A media advisory is an announcement about an upcoming event. It serves as an invitation to reporters to attend and cover the event.

## Contents of a press release

Date:  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information contact:  
name, phone number, email address

### Headline

City, State – Body of release.

Body continued.

For more information: <http://www.website.com>.

-more-  
(centered at bottom of page 1  
if text flows to a second page)

###  
(centered at end of release)

## Contents of a media advisory

Date:

Contact: name, phone number, email address

### MEDIA ADVISORY

### Headline

**Who:** Sponsors, any noteworthy people involved

**What:** Event description

**When:** Date and time

**Where:** Specific location

**Why:** Purpose of event

**Details:** Pertinent background info

###  
(centered at end of advisory; keep to one page)

## Get noticed

Print your press release or media advisory on letterhead. If your network doesn't have a formal letterhead, create one.

Write a descriptive headline that will capture the reader's attention.

Answer the who, what, where, when and why in both, and also the how in a release.

In a release, include quotes from your network members, partner store owner and, if appropriate to the story, community members or customers.

## Timing and follow-up

Send your release or advisory to a daily paper or online publication three to five days before you want the story published or event covered and to a weekly paper two weeks in advance. Generally, Monday mornings are the best time for news organizations to receive releases and Friday are the worst days. Releases can be sent by mail, fax or email. Find out your contacts' preferences.

Call or email your media contacts shortly after they should have received your release or advisory to be sure they received it and ask if they have any questions.

# Community survey

Use this form to survey residents throughout your community to learn about their shopping habits and preferences.

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_ Event/location where collecting surveys \_\_\_\_\_

Store name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Where do you and your family buy your food? (Check all that apply).

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grocery store or supermarket<br>(Hy-Vee, Shop 'n Save, Country Mart) | <input type="checkbox"/> Dollar store                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large store (Walmart, Target)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mom and pop store                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corner/convenience store<br>(7-Eleven, Casey's, Corner Market)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Farmers market                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug store (Walgreens, CVS)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Food pantry, church or community center |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other place: _____                      |

2. Do you shop at \_\_\_\_\_ (partner store name)? Yes / No

If yes, go to the next question. **If no, go to question 12.** 

3. How far away do you live from this store? \_\_\_\_ blocks **or** \_\_\_\_ miles **or** \_\_\_\_ minutes

4. How do you get to this store? (Pick one).

- Walk    Bike    Bus    Your car    Borrowed car    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. How often do you shop at this store? (Check one.)

- Daily    Weekly    Monthly    A few times a year    Never

6. Why do you shop at this store? (Check all that apply.)

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> It is close to where I live. | <input type="checkbox"/> It has good quality.           | <input type="checkbox"/> It has credit.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It is close to my work.      | <input type="checkbox"/> It has a good selection.       | <input type="checkbox"/> It accepts EBT/food stamps or WIC. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I meet my friends here.      | <input type="checkbox"/> It has choices I need or want. | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It has good service.         | <input type="checkbox"/> I know the owner.              | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It has good prices.          | <input type="checkbox"/> It is clean.                   |   |

7. About how much do you spend per week at this store? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What do you buy most from this store? Please be specific (examples: fruit, juice, chips, nonfood items).

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you buy dairy products here? Yes / No

10. Do you buy fruits here? Yes / No

11. Do you buy vegetables here? Yes / No

12. What would it take for you to buy more of your groceries at this store? (Check all that apply.)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I already buy most of my groceries here   | <input type="checkbox"/> Better advertising of healthy items (I didn't know they sell healthy items) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better prices   | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs to accept EBT/food stamps or WIC                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better quality  | <input type="checkbox"/> Nicer looking exterior  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More healthy snack options<br>(examples: baked chips, nuts)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Being able to suggest the items I'd like to buy here                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More general grocery items<br>(examples: whole-grain bread, low-fat dairy, canned and frozen produce) | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better service  | <input type="checkbox"/> Better safety   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaner store   | <input type="checkbox"/> Different store hours   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More choices  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

13. What would help you buy more fruits and vegetables in general? (Select your top three ideas.)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-store specials/more value for the money   | <input type="checkbox"/> Nice displays  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free samples to taste  | <input type="checkbox"/> More variety   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having recipes available at the store  | <input type="checkbox"/> More precut, prewashed fruits and vegetables available |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seeing in-store cooking demonstrations   | <input type="checkbox"/> Locally grown fruits and vegetables                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having a nutritionist or dietitian available to answer questions                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having nutrition information displayed by the food items that are considered healthy |   |

14. On a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "extremely," how important should healthy eating be? \_\_\_\_\_

15. On a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being "never" and 10 being "at every meal," how often are you taking steps towards healthy eating? \_\_\_\_\_

**Note, this section is optional.**

**SO WE CAN BEST USE YOUR ANSWERS, PLEASE ALSO TELL US:**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Home ZIP code: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people you live with: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of children under 18 you live with: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you or does someone you live with own a car in working condition? Yes / No

Do you or does someone you live with receive or use EBT/food stamps or WIC? (Check all that apply.)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> WIC   | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EBT/food stamps   | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, no one in my home receives food stamps or WIC benefits. |   |

Any other comments: \_\_\_\_\_

***Thank you for your time and participation!***



# Network-store partnership proposal

*Increasing access to healthy, affordable foods by partnering with small food retailers*

## What does access to healthy food mean?

Community residents are said to have access to healthy food if they live within half a mile of the closest supermarket in urban areas and within 10 miles in rural areas. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says that **nearly 17 percent of Americans have limited access to healthy food** because they live farther than those distances from the nearest supermarket.

## About the Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy program

- ▶ A community network partners with a small food retailer to increase access to healthy foods.
- ▶ The store owner adds healthy inventory, and the network helps promote the store.

## Benefits for your store

- ▶ New products and more variety will attract new customers.
- ▶ Healthy foods can yield high profit margins.
- ▶ Prominently displayed healthy foods can increase sales.

## Benefits for our community

- ▶ People who live where healthy foods are easy to find are more likely to have lower risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes.
- ▶ Residents will not have to travel as far to access healthy foods.
- ▶ Money spent for healthy food at your store supports our local economy.

## What your community network can do for you if you increase healthy food inventory

- ▶ Promote your store throughout the community.
- ▶ Provide you with *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* posters, signs and shelf talkers to help make the healthy choice the easy choice for customers.
- ▶ Help build stronger relationships with your current and new customers.

## Contact person

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy is a program for food retailers in Missouri and communities interested in developing healthy corner stores or groceries. It is a joint effort of University of Missouri Extension and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.*



# Memorandum of understanding

(The following is an example of what your MOU might say. Adapt the content as needed to fit your situation.)

This memorandum of understanding outlines the activities that will be performed by the [Network Name] and [Store Name]. Through these activities, a strong partnership will be formed between the [Network Name] and [Store Name]. This MOU will be effective from [Start Date] to [End Date].

The [Network Name] will work with [Store Name] to increase access to nutritious foods by offering more healthful options to consumers. This project will also engage [Store Name] customers, community residents, community-based organizations and local businesses in a set of strategies to increase healthy, affordable foods in [Neighborhood, City or County Name].

[Store Name] is committed to the well-being of [Neighborhood, City or County Name], in which the store is located, and pledges to do the following with support from the [Network Name].

▶ ***Stock produce and healthier options***

For example, fresh, canned and frozen fruits and vegetables; whole grains; and low-fat dairy options

▶ ***Display Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy marketing materials and other materials provided by the [Network Name]***

For example, create a shelf space for healthy options near the front of the store and hang posters and other materials promoting healthy eating

▶ ***Label and promote healthy items***

For example, clearly display prices on products and use *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* posters, signs and shelf talkers to encourage healthier eating

▶ ***Maintain cleanliness of store***

For example, pick up litter, provide proper lighting, limit the use of boxes to display produce, and maintain clean floors and shelves

The [Network Name] will support [Store Name] and communitywide efforts to increase access to healthy foods by:

▶ ***Providing resources such as the Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy: Retailer Toolkit, posters, signs and shelf talkers to help the store owner make improvements to inventory, merchandising and layout***

▶ ***Helping the store owner build stronger relationships with current and new customers***

▶ ***Helping the store meet the project goals***

▶ ***Promoting nutrition education classes***

---

[Store Owner's Name]  
[Store Name]

---

[Network Member's Name]  
[Network Name]

This sample MOU was adapted from the Boston Alliance for Health's Healthy on the Block initiative and the St. Louis Healthy Corner Store Project.

# Store owner interview

Use this form to interview the store owner and learn more about the store.

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_ Your names \_\_\_\_\_

Store name \_\_\_\_\_

Store owner's name \_\_\_\_\_

## Background questions

Are you a resident of this community? Yes / No

How long have you owned or managed this store? \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

How many employees do you have, not including yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you accept EBT (electronic benefits transfer, food stamps, SNAP)? Yes / No

Do you accept WIC (Women's, Infants and Children Program benefits)? Yes / No

What are your store hours?

Mon. \_\_\_\_\_ Tue. \_\_\_\_\_ Wed. \_\_\_\_\_ Thu. \_\_\_\_\_ Fri. \_\_\_\_\_ Sat. \_\_\_\_\_ Sun. \_\_\_\_\_

Please estimate the percentage of customers that fit into each category. This information will be helpful as we develop a marketing plan for your store.

Children (school age) \_\_\_\_\_ Youth (high school) \_\_\_\_\_ Young adults \_\_\_\_\_

Middle-aged adults \_\_\_\_\_ Senior citizens \_\_\_\_\_

## Product offerings

How do you make your product selections? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the top three selling food items in your store?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

What are the top three fresh fruits or vegetables sold in your store?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Have you tried to sell fresh produce items in the past? Yes / No

What, if any, challenges have you had carrying fresh produce? (Check all that apply.)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pricing                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Having adequate refrigeration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sourcing affordable produce   | <input type="checkbox"/> None                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spoilage before it sells      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe) _____ |  |

What makes it hard to carry more healthy foods in your store? \_\_\_\_\_

What healthier items are you interested in selling? \_\_\_\_\_  
(See healthy food lists on pages 10 and 11 of *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy: Community Toolkit*.)

**Other**

Do you advertise in the community? Yes / No

If so, what methods do you use? \_\_\_\_\_

What works? \_\_\_\_\_

What hasn't worked? \_\_\_\_\_

Providing nutrition education to your customers is important to us. Offering taste tests or samples of healthy recipes is a great way for your customers to try something new and receive a healthy recipe. Where would we have the space to hold taste tests in your store? \_\_\_\_\_

We will provide you with posters, signs and shelf talkers that promote healthy eating. Where are good places to hang them inside and outside your store? \_\_\_\_\_

What ideas do you have to increase availability, visibility and affordability of produce, dairy, whole grains, lean meats and other healthy foods in your store? \_\_\_\_\_

How can we best help you to offer and sell healthier foods? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any additional comments? \_\_\_\_\_

***Thank you for your time!***

# Store assessment form

With another network member, use this form to assess the store from the customer's perspective: what's healthy, what's not, how the store looks, and where there is room for improvement.

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_ Your names \_\_\_\_\_

Store name \_\_\_\_\_

Store owner's name \_\_\_\_\_

## Store environment

How does the store look from the outside? Take note of signage, lighting, litter, etc.

What is the first thing you notice when you walk into the store?

What ideas do you have to improve the store's appearance?

What ideas do you have to improve the store entrance?

What ads are on the outside of the store? Mark all that apply:

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Other beverages
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

What ads are posted inside the store? (Check all that apply.)

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Other beverages
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Is the store free of clutter? Are the aisles clear so customers can move around?

Is the store clean? Are the shelves, floors and refrigerators clean? Are the shelves and the products on them dust-free?

If not, write down what you think makes the store feel crowded.

Is there any out-of-date product? If so, list those products.

## Fresh produce

How many kinds of fresh vegetables are for sale? List them here.

How many kinds of fresh fruits are for sale? List them here.

From 1 to 4, what is the overall quality of the fresh vegetables?

1      2      3      4

From 1 to 4, what is the overall quality of the fresh fruits?

1      2      3      4

If the store has fresh fruits or vegetables, how are they displayed? Are they up off the floor? Are they in broken or torn boxes? Are they in baskets?

Does the store display produce in these areas?

▶ Near the checkout?    Yes / No

▶ Near the store entrance?    Yes / No

### General healthy grocery items

Does the store stock these items?

▶ Low-fat milk (1% or skim)     Yes  No

▶ Low-fat cheese or yogurt     Yes  No

▶ Bottled water     Yes  No

▶ Fresh fruit cups     Yes  No

▶ Frozen fruits or vegetables     Yes  No

▶ Canned fruit in 100% juice     Yes  No

▶ Canned vegetables, beans or soup with a label that says "low sodium," "low salt" or "no added salt"     Yes  No

▶ Dried fruit, such as raisins or dried cranberries     Yes  No

▶ 100% whole-wheat bread (whole grain or whole wheat is the first ingredient listed on the package)     Yes  No

▶ Baked potato chips     Yes  No

▶ Low- or no-salt nuts     Yes  No

If the store has a deli, does it offer the following options?

▶ Sandwiches on 100% whole-wheat bread?    Yes / No / N/A

▶ Meal combo with fruit and/or water?    Yes / No / N/A

### Other

Providing nutrition education to customers is an important part of this project. Offering taste tests or samples of healthy recipes is a great way for customers to try something new and receive a healthy recipe. Can you identify a place to hold taste tests? If yes, please describe.

Posters, signs and shelf talkers are a great way to point customers toward the healthy choices in the store. Can you identify potential places to hang them?

What makes this store a great asset to your community (examples: location, supports community events)?

Other observations of note:

### Fresh produce quality ratings

- 1 Poor quality:** brown spots, bruised, overripe, wilted
- 2 Low mixed quality:** more poor than good
- 3 High mixed quality:** more good than poor
- 4 Good quality:** absolutely no rotting or moldy items, all very fresh, no soft spots, excellent color

# Action plan

For each community outreach activity or project your network decides to implement, identify the specific action items or tasks necessary to turn your idea into reality.

Project or activity:			
Activity or task	Who is responsible? Who will help?	Additional resources or information needed	Deadline





