



ANALYSIS OF THE MADISON HEALTHY RETAIL ACCESS PROGRAM

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*Informed in part by the City of Madison Healthy Retail Access Work Group
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Produced and Funded by The American Heart Association, Madison Board of Directors*



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The Food Trust

Analysis of the Madison Healthy Retail Access Program

Section 1 - Executive Summary

In fall of 2017, The Food Trust was asked by the American Heart Association to conduct a review of the Madison Healthy Retail Access Program (HRAP). The HRAP was established by the City of Madison in 2015 to increase access to healthy food retailers in the City's underserved communities. Increasing access to affordable, nutritious food through programs like HRAP is an important and laudable goal. A growing body of research has found that when people have access to healthy food, they are more likely to eat a healthy diet and live a healthier life. The Food Trust has extensive experience over its 25 year history developing, managing, and evaluating comparable programs across the country. Over a period of twelve weeks, the Food Trust's Director of the National Campaign for Healthy Food Access, Brian Lang, interviewed several key stakeholders involved in the HRAP to learn about performance to date. For the project, The Food Trust also reviewed program materials and activities in order to develop an understanding of program components and how they facilitate or inhibit performance. In key interviews, all stakeholders expressed concerns that the program had not performed to its full potential and had to this point made very limited progress in addressing inequitable access to healthy food access in Madison. Furthermore, the programs' resources have been underutilized by local retailers and non-profit organizations, which is a strong indicator of a program design flaw. In most comparable programs The Food Trust has worked on over the years the opposite situation is usually true, there are not enough resources to allocate to the multiple worthwhile projects that could be developed in a city or state. Based on The Food Trust's review of the program design and on information provided in interviews, we believe the program needs to make several changes to improve, and to meet its goals of increasing access to healthy food. Those changes consist of the following:



The program needs additional staffing either from within government or in the form of a non-profit partner in order to identify and develop projects and deploy its resources.



The program should have more specific benchmarks for success, which include identifying the types of projects it wants to develop and setting annual goals for projects supported and people served. To develop those benchmarks the program should conduct a thorough round of community outreach to identify assets and better understand needs.



The program needs to revamp its application process, and consider shifting the burden of completing the application to program staff. The program also may need to reconsider its soft requirement that projects have matching funds.

Additionally, we believe there are areas that should be explored further in an effort to improve program performance. Those include the following:



Consider relocating the program inside a City/County agency, possibly as a way to address the staffing issue identified above



Examine how fruit and vegetable distribution influences the Madison retail environment



Develop a plan to evaluate program performance focused on short, medium and long term outcomes.

While this report identifies recommendations that could improve the performance of HRAP, the analysis offered here should not detract from the fact that HRAP remains an important program designed to help Madison address one of the pressing needs of residents of its underserved communities.



Section 2 – Background on The Food Trust

The Food Trust, a nationally recognized nonprofit founded in Philadelphia in 1992, strives to make healthy food available to all. For 25 years, The Food Trust has worked with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers and policymakers to develop a comprehensive approach to improving the health of America's children. The Food Trust's innovative initiatives integrate nutrition education with increased availability of affordable, healthy foods. The Food Trust is recognized as a regional and national leader in the prevention of childhood obesity and other diet-related diseases for its efforts to increase healthy food access in underserved neighborhoods, including the Healthy Corner Store Initiative and Pennsylvania's Fresh Food Financing Initiative, a public-private partnership which has approved funding for nearly 90 fresh-food retail projects across Pennsylvania. Not just a program implementer, The Food Trust has also advised and supported other organizations in a diverse range of communities across the country and internationally as they work to develop comparable programs and policies. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention honored The Food Trust and its work in its Showcase of Innovative Policy and Environmental Strategies for Obesity Prevention and Control, and our programs have been featured in the Top 15 Innovations in American Government by Harvard University.

Section 3 – Project Background

Over the past twenty years, an increasing amount of research has found that low income communities and communities of color have less access to grocery stores and other healthy food retailers when compared to more affluent areas. The disparity is one reason often cited for higher than average rates of diet-related disease in low income communities. A thorough review of the research on the issue is featured in a joint publication of The Food Trust and PolicyLink, *Access to Healthy Food and Why It Matters: A Review of the Research*.





To respond to the problem, a growing number of cities and states have developed programs and policies to improve access to healthy food. The programs have taken a variety of shapes. Some programs, like healthy food financing, provide customized financing to grocery stores looking to build or expand a site in a low income community. Other programs, like healthy corner store initiatives will often provide technical assistance and other resources to equip small food stores to sell healthier foods. Other programs seek to connect grocery stores to low-income communities through improved public transportation routes, or provide the residents of a low income community with incentives to purchase fruits and vegetables, thereby boosting demand for healthy food retail. Much of this work is emergent, and a high degree of innovation has been exhibited in cities and states across the country as people work to solve the problem of inadequate healthy food access.

Like many cities around the country, in the past several years Madison has recognized that access to healthy food is a challenge for some of its residents. According to both the USDA Food Access Atlas, as well as Reinvestment Fund's Policy Map, several areas in Madison have low levels of income and low levels of supermarket access. As a result, the City of Madison established the Healthy Retail Access Program in 2015, with the goals of improving access to healthy food for communities in need. HRAP has been structured in a more general fashion than some of the programs described above, and can provide grants of up to \$35k or more in some circumstances for a variety of different uses, provided that they can increase access to healthy food. On the program's website, it lists a variety of potential uses for its resources, including equipment upgrades to existing stores, the operation of grocery shuttle services, upgrades to EBT equipment used to accept SNAP, or the start-up of non-traditional grocery retail projects like mobile markets.

Section 4 – Key Findings

The program is now more than one year into its implementation, and has supported several projects around the City of Madison which have had uneven results. One small retailer was unable to fulfill her plan to develop a grocery delivery service. Two co-ops have applied to the program and have had modest results, but seem to be falling short of meeting the larger need in the communities where they're located. Two shuttle service proposals received funding, but have been described as modest in scale and clunky in their operation. In the past year, the program has been unable to identify new projects interested in taking advantage of the resources made available by the City. Members of the Madison Food Policy Council are concerned that the dearth of applications will result in the City redirecting



its resources. The American Heart Association serves on the HRAP workgroup and reached out to The Food Trust, one of their national partners, in an effort to better understand the issues impacting HRAPs performance. After several preliminary conversations, AHA in consultation with other Council members decided to contract with The Food Trust to review program operations and make recommendations for improvement. For the assessment, The Food Trust interviewed several key stakeholders from the Madison Food Policy Council and reviewed a variety of program documents.

The Food Trust's analysis has focused predominantly on identifying the reasons why the program has been unable to address the problem it seeks to solve in a manner commensurate with the resources at its disposal. After interviewing several stakeholders about the program, and reviewing materials and other pertinent documents, several key findings are presented here:

1

The program is under performing: Interviews with several key stakeholders indicate that the program has had challenges identifying applicants and awarding them resources to improve access to healthy food. The program has provided modest grants to several projects, but struggled to identify food retailers and other organizations able to utilize program resources to improve healthy food offerings.

2

Compared to comparable healthy food retail programs, HRAP is understaffed: the program has no dedicated staff, and is managed by George Reistad, the City's Food Policy Coordinator, with support from Ruth Rohlich, a Business Development Specialist with the City, both of whom oversee a much larger portfolio of activities. In an interview, George noted that he is only able to dedicate a small percentage of his time to project implementation, albeit with support from other stakeholders around Madison who serve on the food policy council. For comparison, many HFFI's and HCSI's The Food Trust has been involved with maintain anywhere from .5-3 FTEs to oversee program operations.

3

The program does not currently have performance targets that could help focus management direction, i.e. targeted numbers of funded projects it looks to support every year that would improve access to healthy food for people living in Madison low income low access areas.

4

Madison is a unique place and needs a program tailored to its needs – several important dynamics are present in the City and should inform its approach to improving access to healthy food, those include but are not limited to: 1) pockets of health disparities and poverty inside of a generally affluent city 2) low levels of population density compared to other metropolitan areas 3) communities of need with few or no food stores.

5

Compared to other healthy retail access programs around the Country, HRAP has a cumbersome application process, a sentiment shared by members of the business community. In addition to the process itself, the program's soft matching requirement is not realistic for all projects. Given that it is not uniformly applied, it may be confusing to potential applicants.

Section 5 – Recommendations for Improving HRAPs Performance

Overview of Recommendations

The following recommendations are presented by The Food Trust to the American Heart Association to improve the performance of the HRAP. The recommendations are intended to be both specific and actionable, and to the maximum extent possible under the scope of this contract, The Food Trust has also included resources from other projects that the AHA and their partners can draw upon to make them a reality.

Recommendation #1 – Devote additional staffing for HRAP either from within government or in the form of a non-profit partner that can identify and develop projects and deploy resources.

Recommendation #2 - The program should have more specific benchmarks for success, which include identifying the types of projects it wants to develop and setting annual goals for projects funded and people served.

Recommendation #3 – Streamline the application process to the program and/or devote significant staff time to identifying projects and working with applicants to develop project proposals.

Recommendation #1 – Devote additional staffing for HRAP either from within government or in the form of a non-profit partner that can identify and develop projects and deploy resources.

The City of Madison needs to dedicate additional staffing resources to oversee program implementation. Compared to other programs around the country with comparable goals, the program has few staff resources. Healthy small store initiatives and HFFIs are often run by anywhere from .5-3 FTEs, depending on a variety of factors. Given some sensitivities to increasing the head count at the City noted by multiple interviewees, HRAP may wish to consider awarding a grant to a non-profit organization to perform some program functions, such as outreach and project development, while leaving the City responsible for achieving overall program goals. At the same time, it's worth noting that the members of the food policy council should stay engaged and no doubt have important roles to play. But dedicated staff persons for the program would be better able to spend the time required to meet with businesses and non-profit organizations on a consistent basis to recruit potential projects to apply to the program and help shepherd them through the application process in order to more effectively direct resources. If staff persons have the appropriate level of expertise, they could also work with non-profit organizations to build their capacity to conceive of and develop programs that could be implemented in later years of the program.





For the purpose of this analysis, we will stop short of proposing a specific level of staffing the program needs to have. The staffing of healthy retail access programs varies somewhat based on a range of variables and to decide the best course of action in Madison requires some further consideration, most notably being the level of technical assistance the city and its partners wish to provide to projects. However it is clear from our interviews and review of program performance that the level of staffing at present is inadequate to discharge the basic functions of a healthy food access program, which are more labor intensive than some other grant programs the City operates. To give readers of this report a better sense as to the level of effort required for comparable programs, the following excerpt from The Food Trust's forthcoming Healthy Small Store Playbook is included below:

A healthy small food store program is typically staffed by a coordinated group of individuals within one or more organizations who bring significant depth of expertise in working to promote equity in underserved communities, and working together efficiently to support their individual contribution to the effort as well as elevate and link to the work of other partners in the project. The following roles represent responsibilities within a substantial (beyond local pilot) program; they may be met within one single implementing organization, or they may reflect a consortium of program partners.

A nonprofit organization typically serves as the backbone organization or fiscal agent, though this role is sometimes fulfilled by a health department, tribe, university, or healthcare organization. This entity provides program and grant management oversight for the entire project. A community food systems organization--such as a nonprofit partner, food hub, public market, or food distributor--will leverage their capacity and grower networks to support innovative distribution strategies for local and fresh produce into participating healthy small

food stores in the program. The implementation partner (often the same entity as the backbone organization, and if not, is usually one of the same types of organizations) provides boots on the ground support to small food stores and implements the program. Depending on the size of the effort, the team may also include community liaisons, who live or work in the target communities and can help advise program staff and connect the stores and community members. A nutrition education organization such as a nonprofit organization, SNAP-Ed, Ag Extension agent, or other nutrition educator will coordinate the nutrition education efforts in the stores and support taste testings, nutrition lessons, and cooking demos in select stores. An evaluator -- either staff of the backbone or implementation partner, or an independent evaluator-- will lead the development of an evaluation plan for the program and oversee data collection and analysis, as well as dissemination of assessments results.

Another comparable program model, Healthy Food Financing (HFFI), also utilizes a more intensive staffing level to distribute resources compared to HRAP. Oftentimes for HFFIs this work is performed by a food access organization in partnership with a community development financial intermediary. The following excerpt from our Healthy Food Financing Handbook outlines the function of outreach for HFFIs to provide additional context for Madison stakeholders:

Grocers have many choices of where to open their next store, which is why outreach and marketing is critical to the success of a healthy food financing program. The role of the food access organization is to make sure that all grocers doing business in the state understand the program and the benefits to their businesses. In addition to lacking information about the program, grocers also may be skeptical of government funding and whether it is right for their business. The food access organization builds relationships with potential applicants and helps guide them through the application process.

In Pennsylvania's Fresh Food Financing Initiative, which has served as the model for most HFFIs, The Food Trust cultivated relationships with wholesalers, grocers, food industry associations and economic and community development contacts in all 67 Pennsylvania counties to generate applications from supermarket and other fresh food retail operators and determine areas of need. The Food Trust also promoted the initiative through mainstream media outlets and trade publications and through presentations at conferences, meetings and trade shows. In addition, the organization acted as a liaison between underserved communities and the supermarket industry, helping to identify potential sites for investment. As a result of these robust outreach and marketing efforts, the program got off to a strong start and attracted grocery applicants from across the state. The program approved 88 of these applications for funding, representing locations in over half of Pennsylvania's counties.



Case Study of a Healthy Small Store Initiative: Healthy Maine General Store Initiative

The Healthy Maine General Store Initiative (HGSI) is a three year project focused on increasing food access and building bridges between business development and public health organizations in rural Maine. The Initiative is led by Healthy Acadia, a Healthy Maine Partnership (a multi-county local health department in Maine's public health system). Funders and program partners have included Coastal Enterprises Inc. (a local CDFI), Eastern Maine Medical System, and The Food Trust. The goal of the HGSI is to work with store owners to find ways of supporting healthier food access in or through their stores in a way that aligns with their business goals and store capacity. Stores can participate in a variety of ways by design, and participation looks different depending on the store, its location, community needs, and store owner business goals. For example, while most stores participate by adding more healthy foods and beverages and promoting these within the stores, one store with limited refrigeration space indoors made more modest indoor changes but hosts a seasonal farmers market in its ample parking lot. Store owners work with project staff to develop and implement a tailored business plan, and all owners receive training and assistance in progressing toward their goals. New marketing materials were also developed for the program, which reflect the landscape of rural Maine. With a solid foundation in place, there is now interest in addressing common policy and systems barriers to healthy food distribution in remote rural areas of the State, particularly with regards to fresh produce availability, quality, and pricing.

Recommendation #2 - The program should have more specific benchmarks for success, which include identifying the types of projects it wants to develop and setting annual goals for projects funded and people served.

Several interviewees commented on a perceived lack of focus in the program as being one factor inhibiting performance, and we believe that stronger benchmarking for the program could help improve the matter. Given the extent of this analysis, there are limits to the level of benchmarking we will put forward here. What we propose however, is that members of the City and the Food Policy Council engage in the following steps in the coming months to develop metrics and benchmarks

for program performance: 1) review each area of focus for the program and identify potential collaborations 2) conduct outreach to organizations working in each neighborhood to get the lay of the land and discuss interest in collaboration 3) work with existing resources and organizations to develop projects appropriate for each community.

To begin this process, HRAP should review each neighborhood where the program seeks to improve healthy food access and then identify potential collaborators in the area including food retailers but also non-profit organizations and other government entities such as libraries, public housing sites and more. This process need not be exhaustive, and members of the food policy council likely have relationships with most potential points of contact.



After getting the lay of the land, HRAP should conduct outreach to each of those organizations to identify potential projects to work on throughout the year. The outreach process would be an opportunity for the City to discuss what tools it has available for healthy food retail and also engage in a dialogue with community members about their needs and ideas for healthy food access projects. Such a dialogue would respond to the concerns of one interviewee, Mayra Medrano from Madison's Latino Chamber of Commerce, who commented that as is often the case with Madison area community development programs, the City has not done an adequate job meeting with community representatives and potential applicants to understand their needs. A comparable sentiment was also expressed by Kirsten Moore from the Willy Street Coop, when reflecting on her experience providing technical assistance to the Allied Community Coop to help them apply to HRAP.



Finally, after reintroducing itself to potential collaborators, program staff and supporters from the food policy council could work to develop projects tailored to community needs and assets. In communities where small stores exist, program staff could determine whether or not healthy small store strategies would be appropriate. Those strategies are described at length in the Healthy Small Store Playbook, and excerpted below:



In our experiences operating healthy small store programs, the Food Trust has found that the process of working with a small food store in order to increase their capacity to sell healthier foods is one which takes very close collaboration with the store owner in order to determine the strategies that will be utilized to help the store succeed with their efforts. Every small store is unique, and every store owner has a different set of experiences and circumstances to be considered when determining the approach to take with the store. For example, some small store owners may have an abundance of knowledge regarding the handling and storage of fresh produce, but lack the necessary equipment in their store in order to properly display these products. Other small stores may have an excess of unused refrigeration or shelving space, but lack the necessary knowledge needed in order to successfully source or display fresh produce.

It is important to thoroughly assess each store and meet with the store owner in order to determine what the needs of the store are, as well as to identify the changes that make sense for their business. Once a working relationship has been established with the store owner, a

plan can be created to address the areas in which the small store has the greatest need. Through this collaborative process, a variety of strategies can be implemented in order to help the store owner increase their capacity to sell healthier foods, as well as improve the overall quality of the store and functionality of the business. These strategies are designed to meet a specific need of the small food store, and can be implemented in phases throughout the course of the relationship with the store owner. Potential interventions in stores can include:

- *Adding healthy foods and beverages to the store*
- *Developing sourcing and distribution strategies for healthy food and especially fresh produce*
- *Replacement strategies that reduce the visibility of unhealthy products*
- *Providing corner store owners with the equipment they need to sell healthy food*
- *Creating healthy checkout aisles*
- *Making improvements to the interior and exterior of stores to enhance store appearance and community perceptions*
- *Changing store layout to encourage purchase of healthy food*
- *Adding healthy food marketing materials to a store*
- *Providing store owners with trainings on produce handling and other merchandising*
- *Improving store POS systems*

In communities, where no such small or medium sized retailers exist, program stakeholders will need to identify existing resources. Additionally, other concepts could be explored including food purchasing clubs, and “virtual supermarkets” which are described in more detail below.

Case Study of an Alternative Grocery Project: Baltimarket

The City of Baltimore has historically contained many communities with poor access to healthy food. In recent years they have made significant progress in encouraging grocery investment in some notably distressed communities, notably the Howard Park Shop Rite. But Baltimore still contains many places where healthy food access challenges persist. To connect more residents with healthy food access, the City’s Health Department created the Virtual Supermarket Program. The program partnered with a local grocery store, Shop Rite, and community centers across the City to provide grocery delivery services to libraries, schools and public housing sites with poor healthy food access. The program was launched in 2010 in 6 sites, and has since expanded to almost 15 sites across the City. The program has the added benefit of building off of the Howard Park Shop Rite, which itself was developed with public sector economic development incentives. Communities served by delivery sites are more than 1 mile from the nearest grocer, have high levels of poverty, and a poor food environment. In more recent years, grocers in Alabama, Kansas, and Virginia have begun developing comparable services, oftentimes referring to it as a “hub and spoke” model of grocery distribution, with single stores servicing multiple community drop off locations.



Recommendation #3 – Streamline the application process to the program and/or devote significant staff time to identifying projects and working with applicants to develop project proposals.

Compared to other healthy food access programs, HRAP's application process is cumbersome. One interviewee, George Reistad, noted the application is longer than businesses are likely to complete, and that furthermore many for-profit businesses are unfamiliar with grant applications in the first place. Another interviewee, Kirsten Moore from the Willy Street Co-op commented that both the application and contracting processes were extensive, especially when compared with financing available from conventional credit institutions. While Madison certainly needs to obtain documentation and assurances from applicants to ensure that the City can be accountable for and transparent about the types of projects it supports, the current multi-page application as well as the lengthy post-award contracting process is more paperwork intensive than many small store owners and non-profit organizations may

be willing to endure. Furthermore, the soft matching requirement the program seeks from applicants is not appropriate for all projects, and may be confusing because it is not uniformly applied.

To streamline the application process HRAP should waive the matching requirement, and adopt the recruitment strategies that The Food Trust has used for healthy small store programs and HFFIs. For small store programs, the burden of bringing new projects into the program falls upon program staff. The agency will typically recruit operators into the program without requiring that they complete an application. Instead, program managers conduct a baseline assessment of the store. When a store has been selected to receive some of the more significant incentives we offer, such as refrigerators or shelving for healthy food, program staff first solicit verbal assurances from operators regarding their interest, and then request that they sign an MOU to ensure appropriate use of the equipment. To gain a better understanding of this process, both our intake form and MOU are included as attachments.



If the City wants to continue with a more traditional application process, it may consider the development of a two-step application process, where a first round application is used to determine whether or not a program could be considered eligible for funding and a second application is used to take an in-depth look at the project. The first round application is used to eliminate projects unlikely to be funded and save applicants the paperwork burden unless they are likely to qualify for support. The first round eligibility application is included as an attachment for your reference. The application process itself is described in The Food Trust's Healthy Food Financing Handbook:

Fresh food retailers applying for funding from FFFI went through a two-step process. The first step was an eligibility application to ensure that the location and type of store would meet program guidelines and would, therefore, be eligible to apply for funding. The Food Trust evaluated these eligibility applications and made a recommendation to The Reinvestment Fund regarding whether or not applicants were eligible to move ahead to step two, the financial application. The eligibility assessment was designed to be an easy process with a quick turnaround time so that grocery operators did not need to spend unnecessary time and effort to determine if they would qualify for funding. The Food Trust would determine program eligibility within 10 business days.



Areas for Additional Exploration

In addition to the key findings and recommendations described here, we would like to put forth several additional areas for exploration that could be undertaken at a later point in time.

Area for Additional Exploration #1 – Consider relocating the program to a City/County Agency or a non-profit organization



In many instances around the country, healthy retail programs are run by City Health Departments or by non-profit organizations. In some instances HFFIs are housed inside Departments of Economic Development, however the bulk of program administration is usually performed by CDFIs and food access oriented non-profits. The Food Trust has operated several HFFI and healthy corner store initiatives across the country in places as wide ranging as San Jose California, Ohio, and the mid-South region that encompasses Louisiana, Mississippi and Memphis, Tennessee. The agency also consults with multiple health departments who run healthy corner store initiatives in places as varied as rural Maine, Brownsville, Texas and Denver, Colorado. Based on our experiences to date, it is somewhat unusual for the staff of HRAP to be primarily housed in the Mayor's office, albeit with parts of the program overseen by the Economic Development Division. This dynamic may be the reason why the City's Food Policy Coordinator has insufficient time to manage the program, since Executive government offices frequently have competing demands

on their attention and resources. Furthermore, relocating the program or some of its core functions to an agency or non-profit organization more focused on implementation may be a way to identify additional staff resources. If the program was contracted out to a non-profit the Mayor's Office and the Economic Development Division could continue to oversee the contract, but the delegation of key functions would fall to the contractor. Such a structure could have multiple benefits, such as a reduced paperwork burden for applicants and smoother relations with small food store operators who are weary of interacting with City government. As was mentioned earlier in this report, Madison is a unique city in many ways and needs to structure programs that are tailored to its municipal environment. Whether or not such a step makes sense would be a worthwhile discussion for the food policy council. Should stakeholders determine that the most appropriate place for the program is in fact in the Mayor's office, it should be reiterated that securing additional staffing to the levels suggested above, either at the City or in the form of non-profit support, will be critical to HRAP achieving its intended goals.

Area for Additional Exploration #2 – Explore distribution strategies

One stakeholder interviewed for this project, Lindsey Day-Farnsworth, commented that small retailers and community based food projects in Madison faced challenges sourcing healthy food options. Kirsten Moore of the Willy Street Co-op also noted that her stores source products from more than 400 sources. This is a common challenge for people working on comparable projects across the country. We would recommend reviewing the strategies discussed in one of The Food Trust's publications, *Healthy Food and Small Stores, Strategies to Close the Distribution Gap in Small Stores* for further consideration of the issue, A succinct summary of challenges and opportunities from our small store playbook on distribution is included below:

Assistance with the sourcing of healthy or fresh products is a common need among many small store owners. Because of the limitations of the small store format, such as the inability to meet minimum order requirements for a distributor, store owners often have difficulty sourcing the types of fresh or healthy products that they would like to sell. There are a number of distribution strategies that have been implemented in order to address this need.

One strategy includes working with a cash-and-carry distributor (such as Jetco, Restaurant Depot, or Pitco) used by many small food stores in order to source staple grocery products. These cash-and-carry distributors can be inventoried in order to determine which of the products in the distribution warehouse qualify under a health product menu. A list of these products can then be compiled and provided to the store owner in order to assist them with identifying qualifying healthy products. In some cases, these cash and carry businesses will introduce new varieties of healthy products that the store owners can then source for their store, or allow identification marketing materials to be placed in the warehouse to highlight qualifying healthy products.

Another distribution strategy involves working directly with a fresh produce wholesale market





or produce delivery company, providing store owners with contact information for these sources and negotiating purchases of smaller quantities of products from these sources to meet the needs of the small store.

Some small stores or markets are even able to serve as a distribution source for other small stores under a “hub and spoke” model, in which one store sources a larger quantity of fresh produce and then redistributes this produce among other stores in a network, or enables other store owners to pick-up their orders.

While most distribution efforts are rightly focused on sustainable processes for ongoing sourcing and distribution of healthier items, including produce, some program partners use a consignment strategy in which an organization acts as a distributor to the store, stocking produce on a regular basis and purchasing back any produce that does not sell.

Area for Additional Exploration #3 – Develop an evaluation plan to track short-, medium- and long-term outcomes

One interviewee, Matt Phair, a City Alderman who was involved in creating the program expressed the need for good evaluation of program results. He noted that to ensure good stewardship of public resources it was important to understand the impact the program was having. His point is well taken and raises an additional area worth exploring at a future point in time. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of a program like HRAP it's worth careful consideration of anticipated short, medium and long term outcomes. Programs like HRAP are often created to change the food environment as a means to address high rates of diet-related disease. However attempting to reduce those rates in a short time frame is unrealistic. In the short term, efforts to evaluate programs like HRAP do well to focus on total number of people served, and the improvements they perceive in their community as a result of the program. In the medium term it may be possible to start identifying changes to healthy food consumption. The Food Trust discusses this subject at further length in a report we authored on the impact of HFFIs available on our website entitled *HFFI Impacts The Nationwide Success of Healthy Food Financing Initiatives, A Proven, Economically Sustainable Solution*.



Conclusion

Over the course of this report, The Food Trust has proposed several recommendations for improving the performance of HRAP as well as additional areas for program staff to explore. While we think that these next steps are necessary for the program to fulfill its potential, we hope that they do not overshadow the fact that Madison has taken an important and often difficult first step of addressing healthy food access: devoting resources to the program. Many cities and states around the country have not made this progress. Nevertheless, because of Madison's commitment to addressing the issue and willingness to put resources at stake, it is imperative for the City to understand what it needs to do to improve. Over the course of conducting this research, I have been impressed by the thoughtfulness of interviewees and their genuine desire to provide supports to people living in distressed communities. My hope is that after a review of these recommendations and additional introspection, stakeholders in Madison can make adjustments to the design of HRAP that helps benefit people living in underserved communities in their City, so that more residents can live and grow up in healthy, strong communities.



About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. Founded by six cardiologists in 1924, our organization now includes more than 30 million volunteers and supporters. Heart disease is the No. 1 killer worldwide. Stroke ranks second globally and is a leading cause of severe disability. Some form of cardiovascular disease affects more than one in every three adult Americans. Many are seriously burdened by disabilities. To fight these diseases, we fund innovative research, advocate for stronger public health policies, and provide critical tools and information to save and improve lives. Our nationwide organization includes 146 local offices and more than 3,400 employees, with our national headquarters in Dallas. The American Stroke Association is a division that brings together the organization's stroke-related activities.

About The Food Trust

The Food Trust was founded 25 years ago with a simple idea: healthy change. The Food Trust was founded with a simple idea: healthy change. There were neighborhoods where residents couldn't easily buy healthy foods — and science shows that people who live in underserved neighborhoods are more at risk for serious diet-related diseases. The Food Trust has worked with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers and policymakers to change how we think about healthy food and to increase its availability.



MID SOUTH HEALTHY FOOD INITIATIVE

ELIGIBILITY APPLICATION

Date Received: ____/____/____

Applying for financing from the Mid South Healthy Food Initiative (MSHFI) is a two step process. First, the applicant must complete this Eligibility Application to determine whether the proposed project is consistent with the goals and objectives of the program. Once a project's eligibility is determined, the applicant will receive a letter disclosing its eligibility status. Program Eligibility will be determined by The Food Trust, a national expert on food access. HOPE will then invite eligible applicants to complete a full financing application. All applicants are encouraged to review the Mid South Healthy Food Initiative Program Summary & Requirements found on www.hope-ec.org/mshfi.

I. PRINCIPAL INFORMATION

Name:		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Email Address:		Phone Number:

II. BUSINESS INFORMATION (PROPOSED BORROWER)

Legal Name of Business:			
Type of Business:	<input type="checkbox"/> Single Food Market or Supermarket	<input type="checkbox"/> Supermarket Chain (>5 Stores)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Supermarket Chain (2 to 5 Stores)	<input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate Developer	
<input type="checkbox"/> Non Profit Corporation	<input type="checkbox"/> For Profit Corporation	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative
<input type="checkbox"/> General Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited Liability Company	<input type="checkbox"/> Sole Proprietorship	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Current No. of Store Employees:		Proposed Additional No. of Employees (after Investment):	
Part-Time: _____ Full-Time: _____		Part-Time: _____ Full-Time: _____	

III. PROJECT INFORMATION

Street Address:	
City:	State: Zip:
Project Description (check all that apply):	Status of Project Site Control:
<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction	<input type="checkbox"/> Expansion of Operating Store
<input type="checkbox"/> New Store in Existing Building	<input type="checkbox"/> Renovation of Operating Store
<input type="checkbox"/> Redevelopment of Dark Store	<input type="checkbox"/> Equipment
<input type="checkbox"/> Currently Owned	<input type="checkbox"/> Under Agreement
<input type="checkbox"/> No Site Control	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
If Expansion, current size of existing store: _____ square feet	Total size of store after project is complete: _____ square feet
Estimated % of square footage intended to sell fresh fruit and vegetables: _____%	
Estimated Total Project Cost: \$_____ Estimated Finance Request: \$_____	

IV. ADDITIONAL PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

<input type="checkbox"/> Store accepts benefits from state and federal aid programs: <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> WIC

V. ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

- ☐ **Applicant Narrative:** History of applicant business, management list and qualifications (food market operations and/or real estate development experience). Include resumes for key management if available at this time, as well as a list of all owners and their respective % of ownership.
- ☐ **Project Description:** Provide a detailed description of the project, including: current condition, scope of work, fresh food offerings (current/proposed), explanation of project costs, and need for funding. Please provide photos or renderings of project (or other currently operating stores).
- ☐ **Community Support:** Provide a short narrative, articles, maps, community letters, or other documentation to demonstrate the community's need and support for the food retail project. Please address how this store will meet the community's needs by offering affordable, fresh foods.

Attachment A - Sample Application for an HFFI cont.

**CERTIFICATION
& AUTHORIZATION**

I hereby certify on behalf of _____, the applicant organization, that the information submitted in this eligibility application and/or its attachments is a true and accurate representation of the information requested by Hope Enterprise Corporation/Hope Federal Credit Union, its successors, assigns, agents and/or participants, that no relevant information has been deleted, modified in any way, or withheld and that Applicant understands that it has a continuing obligation to amend and/or supplement the information provided in this application if any of the material facts represented herein change prior to loan closing. I also authorize Hope Enterprise Corporation/Hope Federal Credit Union, its successors, assigns, agents and/or participants to obtain information related to this eligibility determination request, including but not limited to, relevant financial or historical information about the applicant, its principals or affiliates.

BORROWER/APPLICANT

TITLE

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY

DATE

Submit your completed application with exhibits to mshfi@hope-ec.org or to:
HOPE | ATTN: MSHFI | 1726 O.C. Haley Blvd. New Orleans, LA 70113 • FAX: 504-527-0691 • mshfi@hope-ec.org

For more information, email mshfi@hope-ec.org or call 504-585-2856.



Attachment B - Sample MOU for healthy corner store equipment

Memorandum of Understanding between Store Owner and **Name of Organization**

This Agreement is made and entered into as of _____ by and between **Name of Organization** a Pennsylvania non-profit organization with offices at **Organization Address** and _____ (name of corner store owner) an individual. This Agreement is entered into with respect to equipment purchased for _____ (name of corner store) located at _____ (address of corner store).

I. Purpose and Parties

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to explain the conditions under which **Name of Organization** will provide a customized mini-conversion which may include, refrigeration, shelving, produce scales, baskets, etc. to store owners participating in the Healthy Corner Store Initiative.

II. Background

The purpose of the **Name of Initiative** is to increase the availability and awareness of healthy foods in corner stores through training and technical assistance to store owners, a healthy food identification campaign in corner stores, strategic investments in corner store layout to increase store capacity to sell and market healthy items and education and marketing in schools near targeted corner stores.

In order to achieve the aforementioned goals, a customized mini-conversion will be provided to corner store owner to increase shelf space, provide more attractive means for displaying produce and provide refrigeration to keep the fruits and vegetables cool and prevent spoilage. **Name of Organization** will provide each store owner participating in the project with equipment suitable to his particular needs to further the goals of the Initiative and ensure sustainability of the conversion project.

III. Corner Store Owner's Responsibilities

The corner store owner agrees to:

- a) use any refrigeration unit(s) and other equipment provided solely for the display and preservation of fresh fruit and other "healthy snacks" The definition of what is a "healthy snack" for purposes of this agreement is defined in the Corner Store Product Menu which is attached hereto and incorporated by reference;
- b) not use the refrigeration unit(s) and other equipment for ice cream, soda or other items not approved in the Corner Store Product Menu;
- c) maintain the refrigeration unit(s) and other equipment in the same condition as when it was provided new to owner;
- d) keep the refrigeration unit(s) and other equipment clean and free from decals, stickers and any advertising materials;
- e) protect the refrigeration unit(s) and other equipment from damage and misuse of any kind which will result in loss of possession of the unit(s) and equipment;
- f) the specific mini-conversion and equipment received as evidenced by the individual equipment invoice attached hereto;
- g) allow **Name of Organization** research partners to evaluate corner stores for healthy changes;

Attachment B - Sample MOU for healthy corner store equipment cont.

- h) accept in-store training on implementing the conversions and problem solving or general planning for the new inventory.

IV. Name of Organization Responsibilities

Name of Organization agrees to:

- a) provide for the installation of select refrigeration unit(s) and/or equipment for purposes of preserving and displaying fresh produce and other healthy food choices;
- b) repossess the refrigeration unit(s) and equipment if it is not maintained in accordance with this agreement;
- c) coordinate with research partners to evaluate corner stores for healthy changes;
- d) provide in-store training on implementing the conversions and problem solving or general planning for the new inventory.

V. Termination

Either party shall have the right to terminate this agreement at any time. Upon termination, **Name of Organization** shall have the right to immediate possession of the refrigeration unit(s) and equipment. As long as the terms of this agreement are followed and the refrigeration unit(s) and equipment is properly maintained, the corner store owner may continue to maintain possession the refrigeration unit(s) and equipment.

Organization Signature

Corner Store Owner (signature)

Corner Store Owner (printed name)

STORE INTAKE INFORMATION**Basic Store Information**

Store ID:		Date Recruited:	
Official Store Name:			Name on Awning:
Store Address:			Zip Code: <input type="text"/> Store Phone #: <input type="text"/>
Owner First Name:			Owner Last Name: <input type="text"/>
Owner Mobile Phone:			Owner Email Address: <input type="text"/>
Preferred Language(s):			Owner Ethnicity/Nationality: <input type="text"/>

Additional Contact Information

Primary Contact: Check if owner is primary contact ☐

First Name:	<input type="text"/>	Last Name:	<input type="text"/>	Title:	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number:	<input type="text"/>	Pref. Language(s):	<input type="text"/>	E-mail Address:	<input type="text"/>

Secondary Contact:

First Name:	<input type="text"/>	Last Name:	<input type="text"/>	Title:	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number:	<input type="text"/>	Pref. Language(s):	<input type="text"/>	E-mail Address:	<input type="text"/>

Internet Connection: ☐

Contact Comments:

SNAP/WIC Participation

SNAP (select up to one):	<input type="checkbox"/> Accepts SNAP	<input type="checkbox"/> Applied For SNAP	<input type="checkbox"/> Interested in Applying
WIC (select up to one):	<input type="checkbox"/> Accepts WIC	<input type="checkbox"/> Applied For WIC	<input type="checkbox"/> Interested in Applying

Store Suppliers

<u>Product:</u>	<u>Primary Supplier:</u>	<u>Secondary Supplier:</u>
Bread:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Milk:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Produce:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Frozen Food (except ice cream):	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Cereal and Dry Goods:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Canned Goods:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Advanced Store Information:

Own/Rent:	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Rent	Square Footage:	<input type="text"/>	Number of Aisles:	<input type="text"/>
Building Heat:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No(disrepair) <input type="checkbox"/> No-Expense	<input type="checkbox"/> A/C <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No(disrepair) <input type="checkbox"/> No-Expense	Deli Section (circle one): <input type="checkbox"/> Yes- Functional <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – non-functional <input type="checkbox"/> No	Store Condition: <input type="checkbox"/> Below Average <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Above Average	
Fresh Fruit Quality (circle one):	<input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable <input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable	Fresh Vegetable Quality (circle one):	<input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable <input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable	Fresh F&V Refrigeration:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate
Fresh F&V Shelving:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate	Dairy Refrigeration:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate	Proteins Refrigeration:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate
				Beverages Refrigeration:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate

Tobacco:

Number of Exterior Tobacco Ads:	<input type="text"/>	Number of Interior Tobacco Ads:	<input type="text"/>
Tobacco Ads next to Candy:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tobacco Ads Located below Three Feet:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tobacco-related Comments: <input type="text"/>			

STORE INTAKE INFORMATION

Baseline Inventory:

Fruits and Vegetables

Fresh Fruit	Fresh Vegetables	Canned Fruit	Canned Vegetables	Frozen Fruit or Vegetables	100% Juice

Dairy

Skim and/or Low-Fat Milk Low-fat Yogurt Low-fat Cheese:

--	--	--

Whole Grains

Bread	Rice	Pasta	Oats	Cereal	Corn Meal	Barley	Other Whole Grain

Proteins

Lean Cuts of Meat Poultry Fish Eggs Dry Beans or Peas Soy Products

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Miscellaneous:

Healthy Snacks Non-sugar-sweetened-beverages Water (ft) Local Fruit or Vegetables

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Attachment D

Key informants list:

George Reistad, *Food Policy Coordinator, Office of the Mayor*

Kirsten Moore, *Willy Street Co-op*

Lindsey Day Farnsworth, *Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Community & Regional Food Systems, University of Wisconsin*

Matthew Phair, *Madison City Alderman, District 20*

Mayra Medrano, *Latino Chamber of Commerce*

Nick Heckman, *Public Health Madison and Dane County*

Attachment E

Suggestions for Background Reading, Available at www.thefoodtrust.org

Access to Healthy Food and Why It Matters: A Review of the Research

HFFI Impacts: Nationwide Success of Healthy Food Financing Initiatives

To Be Published in Winter 2018: Healthy Small Store Playbook

The Healthy Food Financing Handbook: From Advocacy to Implementation