Sonoma County Healthy Retail Project Toolkit

Making Healthy Changes for a Healthier Community
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# Table of Contents

Introduction:........................................................................................................................................................................................................................................ 1
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):........................................................................................................................................................................... 3
Implementation Checklist..................................................................................................................................................................................... 5
Food Safety Requirements.................................................................................................................................................................................. 7
Tobacco and Alcohol Retail Requirements............................................................................................................................................................... 9
Agreement to Participate..................................................................................................................................................................................... 11
Commitment to Customer Health........................................................................................................................................................................ 13
Store Assessment.............................................................................................................................................................................................. 15
Scorecard......................................................................................................................................................................................................................................... 17
Creating Healthy Changes: Improving Your Total Quality Score........................................................................................................ 19

1. Sell a variety of fresh fruit & vegetables................................................................. 21
2. Sell good quality fresh fruit & vegetables........................................................................... 27
3. Prices for fresh fruit & vegetables are reasonable............................................................ 29
4. Sell other healthy food items................................................................................................ 33
5. Participate in the Network for Healthy CA Retail Program........................................... 35
6. Provide health promotion information near fresh produce.............................................. 37
7. Store exterior conditions..................................................................................................... 39
8. Remove ads/signs promoting high fat/sugar foods, unhealthy beverages, and tobacco.... 43
9. Display ads/signs promoting healthy foods...................................................................... 45
10. Remove high fat/sugar foods from checkout area.......................................................... 47
11. Place healthy foods in checkout area................................................................................ 49
12. Post ads for healthy foods on store exterior.................................................................... 51
13. Remove exterior ads promoting high fat/sugar foods, unhealthy beverages, and tobacco... 53
14. Accept CalFresh (SNAP/Food Stamps).......................................................................... 55
15. Accept WIC...................................................................................................................... 57
16. Display WIC and CalFresh (SNAP/Food Stamps) signs.................................................. 59
17. Comply with Lee Law........................................................................................................ 61
18. No bars on windows......................................................................................................... 63
19. Safe and “walkable” within 2 blocks of the store........................................................... 65

Employee Training ......................................................................................................................................................................................... 67
Recognition Program...................................................................................................................................................................................... 71
Evaluation........................................................................................................................................................................................................................................ 73
Resources........................................................................................................................................................................................................................................ 75
Appendices

Adapted from the Network for a Healthy California’s Retailer Fruit & Vegetable Education Toolkit

Appendix A Customer Surveys
Appendix B Selecting a Produce Distributor
Appendix C Produce Storage Mapping, Receiving and Stocking Tips
Appendix D Produce Storage Guidelines
Appendix E Produce Display Equipment
Appendix F Produce Display Considerations
Appendix G Produce Display Tips
Appendix H Signage and Educational Materials
Appendix I In Store Promotional Activities
Appendix J Harvest of the Month
Appendix K Seasonal Produce Guide
Appendix L Food Councils, Boards and Commissions
Appendix M Setting Up a Healthier Checkout
Appendix N Produce Quick Tips
Introduction

Welcome to the Sonoma County Healthy Retail Project. The project aims are to increase the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, help consumers identify healthy food options, and ensure stores comply with food safety, tobacco, and alcohol laws. The long-term goal is to improve the health of those living in Sonoma County by combating the rise in obesity rates and by addressing other preventable chronic conditions, such as diabetes, lung cancer, alcoholism, and heart disease. By taking part in this project, you are joining a movement, showing your dedication and concern for your customers, and helping to improve the health and safety of the community.

This toolkit explains the project and provides steps you can take to help your store become recognized for making healthy changes for a healthier community. Guidelines for participating stores are included as well as sample materials.

What is the Healthy Retail Project?

The Healthy Retail Project was designed to recognize Sonoma County stores (grocery stores, small markets, and convenience stores) for selling a variety of healthy foods, promoting healthy food options, participating in food assistance programs, complying with food safety, tobacco, and alcohol laws, and helping to create a safe and inviting environment in and around their stores.

Participating stores receive technical assistance to help meet the Food Safety, Tobacco and Alcohol, and Store Quality Score requirements outlined in this toolkit.

The program was adopted in 2009 by the Community Activity and Nutrition Coalition of Sonoma County (CAN-C) and is endorsed by Health Action of Sonoma County.

Why is the Healthy Retail Project so important?

People make choices about what foods and beverages to buy based on the choices that are available in their communities. In many Sonoma County neighborhoods, unhealthy food choices are the options that are most often available. Overconsumption of these unhealthy choices put residents of all ages at increased risk of obesity and chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease.

By participating in the Healthy Retail Project...

- Your store may increase profits and decrease expenses by offering healthier options to your customers.
- Your store will satisfy an increase in customer demand for healthier food.
- Your customers will be able to easily recognize healthy options offered by your store.
- The public will recognize your store for making healthy changes that will benefit the health of the community.

1 The Community Activity and Nutrition Coalition (CAN-C) of Sonoma County is a group of individuals, professionals and community based organizations concerned about the nutritional health, activity level and well being of the residents in Sonoma County. Formed in 1998, the mission of CAN-C is to promote optimal nutritional and physical health for Sonoma County residents with an emphasis on children. More information can be found at www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/canc.htm.

2 Health Action was created by the county Board of Supervisors in the face of the mounting crisis in health and health care delivery in Sonoma County and elsewhere in the United States. More information can be found at www.sonomahealthaction.org.
Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: How many stores are participating?**

**A:** As of the spring 2015, 16 stores in and Boyes Hot Springs, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, and south Santa Rosa are participating in the project.

**Q: Why should our store participate in this program?**

**A:** There are many benefits to participating in the program. Your business will have the opportunity to increase profits, decrease expenses, and gain recognition for your efforts to help increase customer loyalty.

**Q: What are the benefits of participating?**

**A:** Participating businesses that are recognized for making healthy changes in their stores will be seen as community leaders for making changes for the health of the community. Once recognized, you will receive the following:

- FREE promotion through an annual scheduled press release.
- FREE promotional materials, available in English and Spanish, to draw customers’ attention, which may include window decals and posters.
- FREE electronic logo that can be used for store-developed advertising and promotional materials

**Q: How do we know this program won’t fade out or disappear?**

**A:** The Healthy Retail Project has been funded by various grants since 2009. While grant funding is time-limited, program staff and CAN-C are working hard to turn the Healthy Retail Project into a long-term program. Our goal is to be able to continue providing stores with valuable assistance and resources after one year in the program. These resources will focus on helping stores increase profits and decrease expenses through the sale of healthier foods and beverages.

**Q: What is the cost of participating?**

**A:** The cost of participating in the Healthy Retail Project depends on the types of changes a store chooses to make. Project staff will provide participating stores with a list of resources and incentives that can help reduce costs and increase profits, including:

- Information on energy efficiency rebate and loan programs.
- Free or low-cost food marketing tools to promote the sale of healthy foods and beverages.
- Information on available grants to help offset the cost of purchasing equipment or marketing signage.
- Information on local produce distributors to help reduce the cost of fresh produce.
- Trainings for staff on merchandising, in-store marketing, produce handling, and promotional events.
Q: What kind of publicity will we receive?

A: Healthy Retail Project staff will promote participating stores through a press release to local and regional newspapers following the bi-annual store assessments. Stores that meet the *Store Quality Score* requirement will also be recognized for *Making Healthy Changes for a Healthier Community* during a City Council and/or Board of Supervisor meeting. Project staff may also help promote in-store events to local businesses with worksite wellness programs as well as through partnerships with community clinics and schools. Additional funding is currently being sought for the development of a Healthy Retail Project website, which would also list participating businesses.
Implementation Checklist

The following checklist provides an outline of project activities that take place during the first year of a store’s participation in the program.

- Healthy Retail Project staff will meet with the store owner and manager to discuss the Healthy Retail Project and Food Safety Requirements, Tobacco, and Alcohol Retail.

- The owner will be asked to sign an Agreement to Participate, agreeing to make healthy changes in the store.

- The owner will designate at least one employee as the project contact for the duration of the program.

- Healthy Retail Project staff will conduct the following evaluation measures:
  - **Store Assessment** to identify available fruits and vegetables, healthy and unhealthy foods, and beverages, tobacco products, and in-store marketing.
  - **Manager/Owner Interview** to enable project staff to tailor evaluation and technical assistance activities to the needs of each store.
  - **Customer Surveys**, with owner and management approval, to assess customer-buying patterns prior to making in-store changes.

- An introductory packet will be delivered to the store manager/owner. The packet will include the following:
  - The Healthy Retail Project Toolkit.
  - A Commitment to Customer Health poster for display in the store.
  - A copy of the signed Agreement to Participate.
  - A Scorecard summarizing the findings of the store assessment.
  - A summary of resources and incentives for which the store qualifies.
  - A mini-grant application, if funds are available.

- Store staff will meet with Healthy Retail Project staff at least once a week for the first month, every other week for the next five months, and every three weeks for the remaining six months to receive technical assistance related to the following:
  - Using the Scorecard and Healthy Retail Project toolkit in order to improve the store’s Store Quality Score.
  - Conducting in-store shopper/community surveys to determine what products customers want sold.
  - Participating in trainings designed to assist each store to improve their Store Quality Score and increase profits and decrease expenses.
  - Understanding available community resources and incentives related to decreasing expenses or increasing profits.
  - Implementing the Smart Meal Restaurant Program (for stores with delis).
The employee assigned to the project (and any other staff) will participate in the following trainings designed to assist each store to improve the **Store Quality Score** and increase profits:

- Food Safety and Handling Training
- Produce Storage and Stocking Training
- Marketing and Promotion Training
- Healthy Checkout Set-Up and Promotion Training
- Tobacco and/or Alcohol Law Compliance Training (if applicable)

The store will use the **Scorecard** to identify areas in the store that meet the **Store Quality Score** minimum standards and areas that need improvement.

Store staff will use the **Improving Your Score** sections of the toolkit (Sections 1-19) to make healthy changes to areas of the store that need improvement in order to improve the **Store Quality Score**.

Approximately one year after starting the program, Healthy Retail Project staff will conduct the following final evaluation measures:

- **Store Assessment** to determine if the store meets the minimum **Store Quality Score** requirements needed to be recognized for making healthy changes for a healthier community.
- **Manager/Owner Interview** to determine if in-store changes led to an increased profit for the store and to identify project improvement opportunities.
- **Customer Surveys** to determine if customer bought healthier products as a result of in-store changes.

If the store meets all requirements for the **Recognition Program**, Healthy Retail Project staff will provide the store with an **Advertising Packet**. The packet will include the following:

- Project window decals
- Project logo on disc that can be used for store-developed advertising and promotional materials
- Other promotional materials, such as banner, poster and poster stand

*Note: Promotional materials are in English and Spanish and are available based on funding.*

Healthy Retail Project staff will continue to provide stores with technical assistance (such as trainings) and resources (such as an updated toolkit and free marketing materials) aimed at maintaining or improving the **Store Quality Score**. This includes conducting a **Store Assessment** and **Manager/Owner Interview** every 1-2 years to help stores continue to make healthy changes for a healthier community.

*Note: Technical assistance, resources, and assessment will be available based on funding.*
Food Safety Requirements

The Healthy Retail Project food safety requirements were adopted to help ensure that healthy food is also safe food. The requirements were developed using the County of Sonoma Department of Health Services, Environmental Health and Safety Section food safety recognition program as a guide. The Healthy Retail Project food safety requirements must be met in order to be recognized for making healthy changes and to obtain use of Healthy Retail Project advertising materials.

- Participating stores agree to maintain an outstanding commitment to food safety by having NO MORE THAN one major critical violation on the most recent food safety inspection conducted by Environmental Health and Safety.\(^3\)

- Stores that do not meet the food safety requirements may still participate in the program by signing an agreement to participate and making healthy changes in the store. Until all food safety requirements are met, stores will not be recognized for making healthy changes and will not receive the advertising packet.

- Stores that fall out of compliance with the food safety requirements during the course of their participation in the Healthy Retail Project will be asked to remove the Healthy Retail Project name and logo until food safety requirements are met.

\(^3\)Results of the most recent food safety inspection will be downloaded from the County of Sonoma Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Division’s website (http://food.sonoma-county.org/foodsearch.htm) on an annual basis. Food safety inspection results are posted approximately one working day after an inspection.
Tobacco and Alcohol Retail Requirements

The Healthy Retail Project (HRP) tobacco and alcohol retail requirements help your store contribute to a safe, healthy community. Project staff trains and educates retailers, licensed to sell tobacco and/or alcohol, about existing tobacco and alcohol laws and how the laws help to create safe and healthy communities. If a store is licensed to sell either of these products, these requirements must be met in order to obtain formal project recognition and to use the HRP advertising materials. Project staff are available to provide training, technical assistance, and resources to assist retailers with meeting the requirements. The tobacco and alcohol retail requirements include the following:

- Participating stores, licensed to sell tobacco and/or alcohol, must comply with all local, state, and federal tobacco and/or alcohol laws.

- All employees of retail locations that sell alcohol must attend and receive a certificate of completion for a free DHS-approved responsible beverage service (RBS) training at least one time every two years.

- All employees of retail locations that sell tobacco must attend and receive a certificate of completion from the free Board of Equalization (BOE) tobacco retail class at least one time every two years. To register for a class call the BOE at 916-322-8536 or register online at http://www.boe.ca.gov/sutax/cigtobclass.htm. The BOE also offers a free, onsite tobacco class conducted specifically for individual organizations. For more information, contact the BOE at 916-323-4088 to arrange for a free tobacco class.

Stores that do not meet the tobacco and/or alcohol requirements during their participation in the Healthy Retail Project will be asked to remove the Healthy Retail Project name and logo until the tobacco and/or alcohol requirements are met.

Primary Tobacco and Alcohol Law Requirements:
**Tobacco Retail Law Requirements* Checklist**

___ Post STAKE Act Sticker** at each register used to sell cigarettes
___ Post California State tobacco license and ensure it is visible to the public
___ Ensure all cigarettes are behind the counter or locked up
___ No sales of flavored cigarettes (other than menthol)
___ Ensure all cigars are behind the counter or locked up
___ No self-service display of tobacco paraphernalia (e.g., rolling papers, filters)
___ No sales of flavored cigarette rolling papers (other than menthol)
___ Ensure all other tobacco products are stored behind the counter and in locked cases
___ No sales of bidis, single cigarettes, or packs containing less than 20 cigarettes
___ No sales to minors of tobacco products or tobacco paraphernalia
___ Train all employees on tobacco laws

* Note: This is not a full list of tobacco law requirements.
**Note: The “We Card” sign provided by the tobacco industry does not meet the state law requirements.

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**Alcohol Off-Sale Retail Law Requirements* Checklist**

Post California State alcohol license and ensure it is visible to public
___ Post mandatory warning signs about cancer, pregnancy and birth defects
___ Enforce the rule that alcohol consumption is prohibited inside the store
___ Ensure proper lighting by illuminating the exterior of the premises, adjacent sidewalks and parking lots under licensee’s control, during all hours of darkness when open for business
___ Ensure the premises (including adjacent sidewalks and parking lots under licensee’s control) are kept clean. Litter is removed daily and the areas are swept/cleaned weekly
___ Ensure graffiti is removed from the premises and parking lot within 72 hours of application
___ Ensure windows are covered with no more than 33% of advertising and signs (Lee Law)**
___ Prohibit the sale of paraphernalia used for illegal drug purposes
___ Register beer kegs 6 gallons or larger
___ No sales to minors or obviously intoxicated patrons

*Note: This is not the full list of off-sale alcohol law requirements.
**California Business and Professions Code § 25612.5
Agreement to Participate

Participating stores will be asked to sign the following agreement to participate:

By signing this form, I agree to:

• Post a Commitment to Customer Health poster in a high traffic area of the store so that customers know [NAME OF STORE] is committed to making changes that benefit the health of the community.
• Allow Healthy Retail Project staff and/or volunteers to conduct evaluation measures on a prearranged basis, such as an annual manager/owner interview, annual store assessments, and customer interviews.
• During the first year in the program, meet with Healthy Retail Project staff and/or volunteers at least once a week for the first month, every other week for the next five months, and every three weeks for the remaining six months to receive technical assistance to discuss changes and progress.
• After one year in the program, meet with Healthy Retail Project staff and/or volunteers on a regular, prearranged basis to discuss ongoing changes and allow staff and/or volunteers to conduct evaluation efforts every 1-2 years.
• Work with other community partners, as necessary, to make in-store environmental, systems and/or policy changes that will support healthy changes that increase profits, decrease expenses, and increase customer loyalty.
• Make changes in the store for the health of the community, such as moving healthy items closer to the checkout, promoting healthier foods and beverages, improving the produce selection, and increasing healthy messages in the store.
• Inform customers about in-store changes through in-store promotional events, advertising, and product promotions.

In return, Healthy Retail Project staff and/or volunteers agree to:

• Provide technical assistance and trainings to store staff to help improve store quality scores, increase profits, and/or decrease expenses.
• Connect staff with resources, such as energy efficiency loan and rebate programs, low-cost in-store marketing programs, and produce distribution or wholesale networks, to help improve store quality scores, increase profits, and/or decrease expenses.
• Promote stores that meet all requirements for the recognition program through a bi-annual press release.
• Keep sales, marketing, store operations and information collected during evaluation and technical
assistance efforts confidential. Information will only be shared with the Healthy Retail Project staff, partner agencies, and project evaluator. Any public reports generated from evaluation activities will not include any identifying information about specific individuals or stores UNLESS permission is obtained from store manager/owner ahead of time. All information gathered will be used to identify ways to increase the usefulness, value and financial benefits of the Healthy Retail Project.

I understand if the store breaks this agreement, it will be removed from the program.

________________________________________  __________________________  ____________
Owner/Manager Name                         Owner/Manager Signature      Date

________________________________________  __________________________  ____________
Director
Health Policy, Planning, & Evaluation Division
County of Sonoma Department of Health Services

Signature  Date
Commitment to Customer Health

As a participant in the Healthy Retail Project, you will be asked to post the following poster in a high traffic area of your store so customers know you are committed to making changes that will benefit the health of the community.

Our Commitment to Customer Health

Our store is committed to helping improve the health of our customers and the community by making ongoing healthy changes in our store. These changes may include, but are not limited to, the following:

• Providing a variety of good quality fresh fruits and vegetables at reasonable prices.
• Offering whole grain products, such as brown rice and whole grain bread.
• Selling reduced fat dairy products, such as 1% or nonfat milk and low-fat cheese.
• Selling lower-sodium products.
• Offering lean cuts of meat, tofu, and/or fish.
• Keeping alternatives to soda in stock, such as water, 100% juice, and milk.
• Offering healthier snacks, such as nuts, unsweetened dried fruits, and baked chips.
• Placing healthier foods and beverages in the checkout area.
• Limiting unhealthy foods and beverages, alcohol, and tobacco, such as candy and soda, in the checkout area.
• Working with our vendors to provide and prominently display products that taste good and are healthier for our customers.
• Promoting healthier foods and beverages using signs and educational materials.
• Limiting advertising for unhealthy foods and beverages inside and outside the store.
• Offering special promotional events such as taste tests, food demonstrations and store tours.
• Accepting CalFresh, California’s version of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
• Accepting WIC, a federal supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children.
• Maintaining all store licensing and following all applicable tobacco, alcohol, and food safety laws and requirements.
• Ensuring all employees of retail locations that sell alcohol to attend responsible beverage service (RBS) training at least one time every two years.
• Ensuring all employees of stores that sell tobacco attend at least one time every two years.

A project of the Community Activity and Nutrition Coalition of Sonoma County
Store Assessment

One of the first steps of the Healthy Retail Project is to conduct a visual assessment of participating stores. The assessment takes approximately 30-45 minutes to complete and looks at the following:

- The availability of fruits and vegetables
- The availability of tobacco products, alcohol products, and healthy and unhealthy foods and beverages.
- Food, beverages (including alcohol), and tobacco advertising on the interior and exterior of the store
- The safety and walkability of the environment outside the store

Project staff will not disturb customers during the assessment and the information collected will not be made public. The results will only be used to help plan nutrition education programs and alcohol/tobacco prevention programs, and will also be used to help participating stores identify areas in the store that meet minimum program requirements and areas that need improvement.
Scorecard

After your store has been assessed, a customized scorecard will be developed identifying areas in your store that meet the healthy food requirements and areas that need improvement. **In order to be recognized for making healthy changes, your store must raise its score to at least 75 points AND meet the standards in each of the first three categories.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Actual Points</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Products Stocked (Meets Standards ≥ 51)</strong></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sells a variety of fresh fruit¹</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sells good quality fresh fruit²</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sells a variety of fresh vegetables¹</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sells good quality fresh vegetables²</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prices for fresh fruit and vegetables are reasonable³</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sells other healthy food items⁴</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing and Promotion (Meets Standards ≥ 12)</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participates in the Network for a Healthy California Retail Program⁵</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides health promotion information near fresh produce⁶</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store exterior conditions⁷</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removes interior ads promoting high fat/sugar foods, alcohol and tobacco⁸</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displays interior ads promoting healthy foods⁹</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removes high fat/sugar foods from checkout area¹⁰</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places healthy foods in checkout area¹¹</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posts ads for healthy foods on store exterior¹²</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removes exterior ads promoting high fat/sugar foods, alcohol and tobacco¹³</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Assistance: Foods Stamps &amp; WIC (Meets Standards ≥ 5)</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepts CalFresh (SNAP/Food Stamps)¹⁴</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepts WIC (Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children)¹⁵</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displays WIC and CalFresh (SNAP/Food Stamps) signs¹⁶</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety and Walkability</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comply with Lee Law (limits ads on windows with alcohol license)¹⁷</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No bars on windows¹⁸</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe and “walkable” within two blocks of the store¹⁹</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Quality Score (Meets Standards ≥ 75)</strong></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creating Healthy Changes: Improving the Total Quality Score

Using the scorecard, identify areas needing improvement in your store. Turn to the appropriate section of the toolkit for suggestions, resources, and tools you can use to improve your score.

Business Assistance

Carrying healthier foods may require changing existing business practices in order to increase and maintain profits over time. Consider revisiting your business plan to ensure a successful and profitable transition to carrying healthier foods.

If, during the process of participating in the Healthy Retail Project, you find you need assistance with business operations, contact the Small Business Development Center (SBDC):

Website: www.SonomaSBDC.org
Phone: (707) 595-0060

Website: www.MarinSBDC.org
Phone: (415) 755-1100

The Sonoma and Marin SBDCs connect small business owners with Business Advisors who work hands-on with clients to address challenges, seize opportunities and increase profits. Their Business Advisors can help you with:

• Business planning
• Marketing strategies and planning
• Sales
• Access to capital, including bank finance, SBA loans, and asset financing
• Venture funding
• Government contracting
• Strategic technology acquisition and practical, hands-on application
• Financial Projections & Budgeting
• Operating Challenges
• And more…

Visit their websites for upcoming seminars in Sonoma and Marin, or check out their extensive catalog of online courses.
1. Sell a Variety of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

How to increase your score:

Sell seven (7) or more types of fruit (varieties of the same fruit, such as apples, do not count as more than one type of fruit) AND

Sell seven (7) or more types of vegetables (varieties of the same vegetables, such as potatoes, do not count as more than one type of vegetable).

Many business owners are concerned that if they offer fresh produce (fruits and vegetables) their customers won't buy them. This is a valid concern. After all, businesses need to make money in order to continue carrying healthy products. To address this concern, we focused this section of the toolkit on four areas that are shown to help increase customer demand for fresh produce:

- Carry produce your customers want.
- Increase the selection of produce.
- Increase the visibility of produce in your store.
- Create a demand for produce.

Remember, you don't have to carry a large amount of produce. Smaller amounts, with good variety, fresh appearance, reasonable prices, and specials will encourage people to buy.

Most popular fresh fruit in the United States* (in order):

Bananas
Apples
Oranges
Grapes
Strawberries

Most popular fresh vegetables in the United States* (in order):

Potatoes
Head Lettuce
Onions
Tomatoes

*Agricultural Marketing Resource Center, www.agmrc.org (July 2012)
**Carry Produce Your Customers Want**

- **Start with snack or seasonal produce:** If your store has never sold produce before, begin by selling popular fruits and vegetables like apples, oranges, bananas, baby carrots, or even seasonal items packaged into “snack bags.” When the time comes to expand, ask customers what types of produce they would like you to carry. You'll also want to select items that you are best equipped to carry and store. The goals are to keep your produce fresh and attractive so it will sell and prevent waste.

- **Talk to your customers.** Ask your employees to talk to customers throughout the day. Have them ask customers what types of produce they would like your store to carry. Are there seasonal favorites they would buy? Are there produce items they eat regularly? As an independent retailer, you have a personal relationship with your customers. You can strengthen that relationship by listening to what produce customers want and providing it when you can.

- **Survey your customers.** Surveying your customers is another way to determine what produce your customers would like. Ask your customers to complete a short survey in-store and use the information to stock items that are most requested.

- **Survey your community.** You can work with a community organization or volunteers to conduct a sidewalk or door-to-door survey to find out what fruits and vegetables are most desired by the community. A community survey is also a great way to let your neighbors know you want to hear from them because you're interested in making healthy changes for the health of the community.

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**Working with Youth Groups**

You can recruit local youth to help talk with customers or conduct surveys. Community organizations that have after-school programs or work with young people can help connect you with volunteer youth to conduct surveys. Three to seven volunteers can talk to enough customers to help you make a sound decision about what types fruits and vegetables you should sell and promote in your store.

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**Appendix A: Customer Surveys**

Includes two samples of customer surveys: an in-store shopper survey and a community survey. Instructions on how to analyze the survey results are also included.
Increase the Selection of Produce

- **Select a local produce distributor:** Picking a produce distributor should be a strategic business move. Evaluate the quality of the distributor’s fruits and vegetables, their customer service, and price. Pick a distributor that can be flexible to your business needs, whether you are looking for produce to be delivered or you want to pick it up yourself.

- **Carry produce that does not need refrigeration.** If you do not have refrigeration units, consider carrying the following fruits and vegetables. These can be displayed in a ventilated, air-conditioned room for up to seven (7) days:
  - **Fruits:** apples, avocados, bananas, cantaloupes, grapefruit, kiwi fruit, lemons, mangos, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, watermelon
  - **Vegetables:** acorn squash, bell peppers, butternut squash, eggplant, jicama, onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes

- **Carry pre-packaged produce.** Many shoppers find pre-washed and/or packaged vegetables and fruits very convenient. Consider carrying a variety of pre-packaged produce as well as snack-packs for kids.

Appendix B: Selecting a Produce Distributor
Includes information on types of distributors, how to partner with other retailers to increase your buying power, and delivery considerations. Also included is a list of local Sonoma County produce distributors, many of whom deliver for a small fee.

Appendix F: Produce Display Guidelines
Includes information on produce display considerations, such as proper temperature, misting, leafy greens considerations, stacking, and rotation.

Sell Produce as an Impulse Buy
Each year, more customers are buying fresh cut fruits and vegetables as impulse buys because of ease. You can increase the sale of fruits and vegetables by selling more expensive fruits - such as blueberries, strawberries, cherries, and grapes - in small, affordable snack-packs when in-season. Baby carrots and in-season corn on the cob also make great impulse-buys for the checkout area. More expensive produce can also be cut, wrapped in plastic, and sold in smaller quantities.
**Increase the Visibility of Your Produce in Your Store**

- **Move your produce section to the front of the store.** Fresh fruits and vegetables are very delicate, so you want to sell them as quickly as possible. With this in mind, display your produce items near the front of the store. Doing so can help them sell faster.

- **Look for ways to find more room in your store for produce displays.** Are you using some of your floor space to store cases of canned foods, paper products or other non-perishable items? Store these items out of sight. Doing so will give you more room for your produce items.

- **Purchase or repair refrigeration units, display cases, and display tables.** Having refrigeration and display units that work properly will help make your store look nice and keep your produce fresh. Remember, the fresher your produce looks, the more you will sell.

- **Organize your produce.** Look at your current selection of produce and the space where you display your produce. Does it look organized or does it look like produce was placed without thought? Does produce look fully stocked or are there “holes” in your display? Ensuring that your produce section is organized and well stocked at all times will help draw customers’ attention and sell more produce.

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**Before**

![Before image]

**After**

![After image]

School Market reorganized the aisles to put in a produce display (Oakland, CA).

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**Appendix E: Produce Display Equipment**

Includes examples of produce display equipment, things to consider when choosing equipment, and information on grants and low-interest loans that can help you purchase equipment.

**Appendix G: Produce Display Tips**

Includes tips on how to create produce displays that are organized, visually appealing, and will help sell produce quickly.
Create a Demand for Produce

• **Price items clearly.** Ensure that all fruits and vegetables have the price clearly listed. Customers are less likely to buy produce if there is not price or the price is not clearly listed for each product.

• **Sell produce at the checkout.** Consider selling produce items at the checkout as impulse buys. Fresh, in-season fruit is a great option.

• **Offer specials on “ripe” produce.** You might find you will gain more customers who come in to see what is on sale that day. Here are some example programs:
  - Offer “buy 1, get 1 free” on “ripe” produce
  - Set up a “daily specials” table, where you place very ripe fruit for quick sale
  - Offer loyal customers the over-ripe produce for free with any purchase

• **Offer specials on seasonal produce.** Buy items at the peak of the season for best price. Seasonal fruits and vegetables are typically cheaper than produce that is out of season. Offering seasonal produce for a special price may help it sell faster. A list of seasonal fruits and vegetables can be found on the Sonoma County Growers Exchange website (www.scge.net/pdf/scge_produce_guide.pdf).

• **Offer locally grown produce.** Some people want to buy local produce for environmental reasons and to support the local economy. Buying local may even be cheaper for the store owner because there are fewer transportation costs. If you buy produce from a local farm or distributor, add “locally grown” signs to inform your customers.

• **Offer organic produce.** More and more people want to buy organic produce for environmental and health reasons. If you sell organic produce, be sure to add “organic” signs to inform your customers.

• **Host special in-store events.** Increase demand for produce by conducting tastings, food demonstrations and holiday cross promotions to increase produce sales.

• **Cross merchandise products:** Suggest easy ways to eat fruits and vegetables by selling complementary items together, like stocking peanut butter near apples and pears, or placing light ranch dressing by carrots and celery.

• **Sell meal or snack “kits”:** Shoppers love convenience. Based on the responses to your customer surveys, consider putting together some meal and snack kits for a reasonable price. Sales will vary based on your shoppers’ preferences and seasonality so start small and see what works.

Appendix H: Signage and Educational Materials

Includes descriptions and examples of attractive, free and low-cost signage and educational materials available from the Network for a Healthy California.

Appendix I: In-Store Promotional Activities

Includes descriptions of promotional activities, including taste tests, food demonstrations, and holiday cross promotion to promote sales.
Offer a Meal or Snack Kit
Shoppers love convenience. Consider putting together meal and snack kits for a reasonable price. Popularity with these will vary based on your customers’ preferences and whether the produce is in season. Start small and see what works.

**Guacamole Kit**
- 2 Avocados
- 1 Onion
- Cilantro
- 1 Tomato
- 1 Lime
- 1 Chile

**Soup Kit**
- 1 Chayote
- Half corn cob
- 2 Celery sticks
- 1 Onion
- 2 Carrots

**Fruit Salsa Kit**
- 1 Mango or Persimmon
- 1 Onion
- 1 Garlic head
- Cilantro
- 2 Jalapeño

One Dollar “Snack Bags”
Make small affordable snack packs or a “2 for $1” deal for seasonal items near the register. These are healthy impulse buys that children can choose on the way to school or adults might buy for their lunch break.
2. Sell Good Quality Fresh Fruit & Vegetables

*How to increase your score:*

All or most of your fruits and vegetables must be of good quality (very fresh, no soft spots, excellent color). We determine quality by looking for wilting, decay, shrivels, brown stems/dry stem cuts, and color changes.

*Properly store all produce*

- **Display Equipment:** Ensure that you have the right display and refrigeration equipment needed to store and display produce at the right temperatures. Ensure that all your equipment is working properly.
- **Proper Temperatures:** Ensure that all produce is stored and displayed at the correct temperature to maximize the shelf life of your produce and limit spoilage.

**Appendix C: Produce Storage Mapping, Receiving and Stocking Tips**

Includes steps and considerations to properly prepare for, receive and handle incoming produce deliveries.

**Appendix D: Produce Storage Guidelines**

Includes information on produce storage, including:

- proper storage temperatures
- information on produce that creates and should be kept away from ethylene gas
- information on odor absorbing produce
- icing tips
- reminders about prepackaged produce

**Appendix E: Produce Display Equipment**

Includes examples of produce display equipment, things to consider when choosing equipment, and information on rebates, grants and low-interest loans that can help you purchase and repair equipment.
**Check and rotate produce regularly**

- **Check Produce Regularly:** Check your produce items a few times a day. Throw away any bruised, damaged, foul smelling, or shriveled items (this process is also called culling). Although it may be difficult to throw away produce because you feel as if you are losing money, you may lose more money from lost sales if you don’t. Customers want fresh, attractive produce and may not buy anything if some of your produce looks bad.

- **Rotate Produce:** Stack older produce in front or on top of the newer items so that it sells first. To avoid throwing away inventory, handle your produce gently to prevent bruising, display produce at the optimal temperature, mist produce when appropriate, and stack your produce carefully.

**Train Your Staff Handle Produce**

If you or your staff need training on how to handle, display, or store fresh produce, consider the following:

- **Keep the produce near the checkout area** so your staff can organize the produce during slow times of the day. Keeping produce near the checkout area will also make the front of the store look more colorful and attractive.

- **Designate a select number of employees to check the produce regularly** to remove spoiled items and keep the display looking full, organized and fresh.

- **Ask your produce distributor if they offer free training or assistance** with handling, displaying, and/or storing fresh produce. If they don’t, consider switching to a produce distributor that does.
3. Prices for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables are Reasonable

**How to increase your score:**

Price your produce no more than 10% higher than the county average for a given item.

According to Integra Information System's 2008 industry profile, grocery stores generally charge 12% more for produce than the price they paid for it wholesale. This is called a mark-up. A $1.00 ear of corn (wholesale) would therefore cost $1.12 at a grocery store. If a small market were to add an additional 12% mark-up to the price of produce, the price of a $1.00 ear of corn (wholesale) would be around $1.25. These high prices can cause customers to shop at other stores. So, how do stores lower the price of fruits and vegetables?

This section will focus four common ways stores can reduce the price of produce:

- Switch to a local produce vendor who delivers.
- Sell produce that's in season.
- Increase produce sales.
- Form or join a buying group.

**Switch to a Local Produce Distributor Who Delivers.**

Many of the smaller stores we spoke with told us they want produce delivered but were concerned about cost. Here are few of the common questions about produce delivery and answers that might surprise you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have a small market. I have to purchase a small amount of produce because of limited space. Isn't it expensive to order small amounts of produce from a local distributor?</td>
<td>Maybe. In August 2011, two small markets participating in the Healthy Retail Project began ordering and having produce delivered from local distributors. They immediately saw an improvement in the quality of their produce and a decrease in some of their produce prices. Some produce prices were even lower than the local supermarket!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isn't it expensive to have produce delivered?</td>
<td>There is usually a fee to have produce delivered. But, the price may not be as high as you think. Many produce distributors deliver to different areas of the county on different days of the week. This helps them reduce delivery costs by reducing vehicle trips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's cheaper for me to go to a local supermarket or drive to the produce market in Oakland for the best prices. Why would I want to use a local producer distributor when I can get the produce myself?</td>
<td>There are costs you may not have considered when picking up produce yourself. For example, if you calculate costs associated with your time, the produce mark-up, and transportation costs, you may find that it's cheaper to have produce delivered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a lot of Latino and Asian customers that want culturally specific produce. Do local produce distributors carry produce that these customers would buy?</td>
<td>Many local distributors have a large network of producers from which they buy produce. If they don’t have it in stock, many will work within their networks to find the produce you need at the best price.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Appendix B: Selecting a Produce Distributor**

Includes a list of local Sonoma County produce distributors and their distribution schedules. All distributors listed will deliver. Some deliver only to certain areas of the county. Many deliver to all areas of the county, but only on certain days of the week.

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**Sell Produce That’s in Season.**

Buy produce at the peak of the season for the best price. Seasonal fruits and vegetables are typically cheaper than produce that is out of season, and offering seasonal produce on special may help it sell faster.

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**Harvest of the Month**

Sonoma County’s Harvest of the Month program seeks to promote a different locally grown, seasonal fruit or vegetable each month. Participating stores, restaurants, farmer’s markets, and community supported agriculture (CSA) programs receive signage mailed one week before the end of the month, which they use to promote the sale of Harvest of the Month items. Participation in the program is free. To sign up, call Healthy Retail Project staff at (707) 565-6680.

**Appendix J: Harvest of the Month**

Includes information about the Sonoma County Harvest of the Month (HOTM) program, links to free materials, and a calendar of seasonal produce.
Increase Produce Sales

One of the best ways to reduce the price you pay for produce is to order larger quantities. In order to do that, you must sell more. Here’s how other stores have increased the sale of fruits and vegetables:

Carry the produce your customers want.

Carrying fruits and vegetables that your customers don't want means they probably won't sell well. **Section 1** of this toolkit includes ideas on how to figure out what your customers want, including talking to your customers throughout the day, surveying your customers in the store, and working with a community organization to survey residents in the community around your store.

Price your produce clearly.

Customers like to know how much they’re paying for produce. Pricing fruits and vegetables is the easiest way to sell produce quickly. Many stores that added pricing to their produce see an immediate increase in sales.

- **Selling by the piece** is easy for both you and your customers because you won’t have to invest in scales. Customers will know exactly what they are getting and for how much (three bananas for a dollar, apples for $0.30 each, etc.), which will lead to a speedy check-out.

- **Selling by the package** is also convenient, but requires additional work by either your staff or your distributor. Packaged produce also has special handling considerations (**see Appendix D: Produce Storage Guidelines**).

- **Selling by weight** is common in larger stores. If you don’t have room for scales or the time to make sure they are correctly calibrated, selling by the piece or package may be the way to go.
Create attractive produce displays.

Creating an attractive produce display can make your produce section look more appealing and increase sales. Review Section 1 for ideas on increasing the visibility of produce in your stores and Appendix G for produce display tips.

Ensure your produce looks fresh.

Ensuring that all or most of your fruits and vegetables are of good quality (very fresh, no soft spots, excellent color) make them more appealing to customers. Review Section 2 for ideas on how to properly store produce, how to check and rotate produce regularly, and the importance of training your staff to handle produce.

Become a CalFresh or WIC Vendor

Accepting CalFresh and WIC may bring new customers to your store. Because CalFresh and WIC vouchers can be used to buy produce, you’ll sell more. See Sections 14 and 15 of this toolkit for more information on becoming a CalFresh and WIC vendor.

Form or Join a Buying Group

Consider forming a buying group with other small stores in order to buy larger quantities of produce at a lower price.
4. Sell Other Healthy Food Items

*How to increase your score:*

Sell at least one (1) item in each of the categories listed below. These items are considered healthier options by WIC, California’s federally funded health and nutrition program for women, infants, and children.

Studies have shown that WIC approved foods help to improve overall nutrition and health for participants of the program. The Healthy Retail Project seeks to work with stores to carry and advertise these products in order to improve the health of your customers:

**Category 1 – Dairy and Soy**

- Milk – skim, non fat, plain white (not flavored- chocolate, strawberry, vanilla)
- Milk – 1%, low fat, plain white (not flavored- chocolate, strawberry, vanilla)
- Milk – 2%, reduced fat, plain white (not flavored- chocolate, strawberry, vanilla)
- Mozzarella cheese, part skim
- Soy beverage, plain, with no added sugar or sweeteners
- Soy beverage, flavored, vanilla or chocolate

**Category 2 – Meat Protein**

- Ground beef or turkey, lean (85% or higher)
- Whole chicken
- Tuna (light) canned in water
- Salmon canned in water
- Sardines canned in water, tomato, or mustard

**Category 3 – Non-Meat Protein**

- Tofu, plain
- Beans, dried
- Beans, canned with no added fats, sugar or sweetener

**Category 4 – Grains**

- Whole wheat bread
- Brown rice
- High fiber cereal (≥ 3 grams fiber, ≤ 12 grams sugar per serving)
- Oatmeal (plain)
- Tortillas, soft corn or whole wheat (no lard)
Category 5 – Canned Fruits & Vegetables
- Any canned fruit packed in 100% fruit juice
- Any canned vegetable with no added fats, sugar, or sweetener

Category 6 – Frozen Fruits & Vegetables
- Any frozen fruit with no added fats, sugar, or sweetener
- Any frozen vegetables with no added fats, sugar, or sweetener

Category 7 – Baby Foods
- Baby food, jarred, single fruit
- Baby food, jarred, single vegetable
- Baby food, jarred, single meat

WIC Authorized Food List: A copy of the WIC Authorized Food List Shopping Guide can be found at www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WIC-AuthorizedFoodListWAFL.aspx.

WIC Qualifying Brands: A list of brands that qualify under the WIC program can be found at www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WIC-CAFoodListsDatabase.aspx.
5. Participate in the Network for Healthy California Retail Program

_How to increase your score:_

Participate in the Network for Healthy California Retail Program. If you are not already a part of the Network for a Healthy California Retail Program, contact the Network’s Retail Program Specialist at (707) 565-6680 to see if you are in a qualifying area.

If your store is in a qualifying area, the Network for a Healthy California Retail Program Specialist will meet with you and provide you with the following, at no cost:

- Posters and signs with healthy messages
- Recipe cards
- Advertising and marketing materials
- Food tastings, demonstrations, and other special events for your customers
- Ideas for creating a healthier store, raising awareness, and gaining more customers

Retail program merchandising materials can be found here: [www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/RetailMerchandising.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/RetailMerchandising.aspx)
6. Provide Health Promotion Information Near Fresh Produce

*How to increase your score:*

Include posters, brochures, nutrition information, images of produce, or images of people eating produce within six (6) feet of your produce section.

**Health Promotion Information:** Display health promotion information around fruit and vegetables displays in your produce section. Examples of health promotion information include general nutritional information and materials from programs such as:

- **Network for a Healthy California:**
  Free retail program merchandising materials can be found here: [www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/RetailMerchandising.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/RetailMerchandising.aspx)

- **Produce Councils, Boards & Commissions**
  Many fruits and vegetables have a council, board or commission that seeks to provide customers with information. One way they do this is to provide stores with free marketing materials, such as signs and information cards. Stores can use the materials to promote sales. **Appendix L** has a list of known California and National produce councils, boards and commissions you can contact for more information.

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**Create a Special Display Area or “Health Zone”**

Creating a special produce display with signs will draw customers’ attention. This technique may require reorganizing the store layout to allow for a more open and welcoming sales area.
Hand Written Signs: Designate an employee to design healthy message signs, such as on blackboards or cards. Create signs, even handwritten signs, with simple messages, such as:

- “Healthy Choice”
- “Get Healthy with Fresh Produce”
- “Eat your 5-a-Day”
- “Healthy Snack”
- “Water, the smart choice”
- “Delicious, In-season, and Healthy!”


Pears
2 for $1
Ripe & Ready to Eat!!!

Handwritten sign

Healthy Recipes: Recipe cards that highlight your produce items are a great way to help customers feel more confident about buying fresh fruits and vegetables to prepare at home. Recipe cards are also a great way to push ripe produce like posting a recipe for banana bread by some bananas that are beginning to brown. The following websites have free recipes for downloading:

- CA Department of Public Health: Recipes & Cookbooks (English & Spanish) www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo/healthyliving/nutrition/recipes/Pages/default.aspx
- Network for a Healthy California: Champions for Change Recipes www.cachampionsforchange.net/en/Recipes.php (English)
  www.campeonesdelcambio.cdph.ca.gov/es/Recetas.php (Spanish)
- US Department of Agriculture: SNAP-Ed Connection Recipe Finder http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/ (English)
  http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/es (Spanish)
7. Store Exterior Conditions

**How to increase your score:**

Make changes to the exterior of your store in at least four (4) of the following seven areas. Making changes in all seven (7) areas will give you the maximum points possible.

1. **Produce Bins**
   - Place produce bins on the sidewalk in front of the store.

2. **Displayed Products**
   - Place healthy food and beverage products (not produce) on the sidewalk in front of the store and/or inside the store next to the window.

   OR

   - Remove ALL tobacco and unhealthy food and beverage (including alcohol) displayed on the sidewalk in front of the store AND inside the store next to the window.

   *Note: Products are considered “next to the window” if there is not enough room for a person to walk through between the products and the window.*

3. **Vending Machines**
   - Add vending machines containing healthy food and beverages on the sidewalk in front of the store.

   OR

   - Remove ALL food and beverage advertising (banners, posters, temporary signs, etc.) from the roof, walls or elsewhere on the property such as on fences, garbage cans, sign poles, gas pump islands, parking lots, etc.
4. **Food and Beverage Advertising**

- Place healthy food and beverage advertising (banners, posters, temporary signs, etc.) on the roof, walls or elsewhere on the property such as on fences, garbage cans, sign poles, gas pump islands, parking lots, etc.

OR

- Remove ALL tobacco and unhealthy food and beverage (including alcohol) advertising (banners, posters, temporary signs, etc) from the roof, walls or elsewhere on the property such as on fences, garbage cans, sign poles, gas pump islands, parking lots, etc.

5. **Painted Images of Healthy Food and Beverages**

- Paint images of healthy food (e.g. tomato, apple) and/or beverages (e.g. milk), on doors or windows of the storefront.

6. **Painted Images of Unhealthy Food and Beverages and Tobacco**

- Remove ALL painted images of tobacco and unhealthy food (e.g. hamburger, hot dog) and beverages (e.g. soda, shakes, alcohol) from doors or windows of the storefront.

7. **Painted Murals**

- Paint a mural of healthy food and/or beverages on the building walls. Paintings may depict only one produce (e.g. an apple or tomato) or a scene (e.g. a produce section/stand with many types of fruits and vegetables).

---

**Before**

Example of a School Market in Oakland, CA. (Note: bike rack and lighting installed over doorway.)

**After**

Example of healthy advertising outside a small market. (Philadelphia, PA)
Healthy foods are those that include minimal or no added fat, sugars, or sweeteners. Examples include:

**Beverages:**
- Water
- Fruit juice (100%)
- Non-fat and low-fat 1% milk products
- Unsweetened black coffee

**Foods:**
- Fresh or dried vegetables
- Fresh or dried fruits (no sugar added)
- Whole grain snacks (≥ 2 g fiber per serving)
- Energy bars (≤ 14 g sugar per serving)
- Granola bars (whole grain, ≥ 2 g fiber, ≤ 1 g saturated fat, ≤ 14 g sugar per serving)
- Nuts and seeds (no trans fats)
- Whole grains
- Beans
- Lean meat, poultry, and fish

Unhealthy foods are high calorie, low nutrient foods and beverages. Examples include:

**Beverages:**
- Soda (regular or diet)
- Sweetened beverages (energy drinks, coffee/tea, sports drinks, etc.)
- Shakes
- Liquor and beer

**Foods:**
- Gumball or candy machine
- Candy (hard or chewy candy, candy bars, gum, etc.)
- Chips and other salty snacks (corn chips, potato chips, pork rinds, etc.)
- Sweet desserts, such as pastries, cookies, and cakes
- Ice cream
- Beef jerky
- Highly sugared cereals (12 or more grams of sugar per serving)
- Fried foods
- Hamburger and hot dogs
- Other foods with high amounts of sugar, fat and/or sodium

**Tobacco products:**
- Cigarettes
- Cigarillos (little cigars)
- E-cigarettes, e-hookah pens
- Chewing tobacco, Snus
8. Remove Ads/Signs Promoting High Fat/Sugar Foods Near the Checkout

*How to increase your score:*

Allow no more than two (2) ads, signs or promotions (such as display stands) for tobacco and unhealthy food/beverages (including alcohol) next to the checkout counter.

Having no (0) ads, signs or promotions for tobacco and unhealthy food/beverages (including alcohol) next to the checkout counter will give you the maximum points possible.

*Remove ads/signs for tobacco and unhealthy food/beverages (including alcohol) from the following locations:*

- Attached or directly next to the checkout counter
- Below the main checkout level (under the register and area where items are placed for purchase)
- On the floor (if standing in checkout isle or next to counter)
- Hanging from the ceiling (directly over register)

*Examples of the types of ads to remove include:*

- Signs and posters with pre-printed advertising (usually produced by the manufacturer, but may have prices hand-written by the local merchant)
- Decals or stickers
- Any other advertising that include a brand name or logo

*Examples of tobacco products and unhealthy foods/beverages include:*

High calorie, low nutrient beverages:

- Liquor and beer
- Soda and other sweetened beverages, including diet drinks
- Shakes

High calorie, low nutrient foods:

- Candy (hard or chewy candy, candy bars, gum, etc.)
- Sweet desserts, such as pastries, cookies, and cakes
- Ice cream
- Highly sugared cereals (12 or more grams of sugar per serving)
- Chips and other salty snacks (corn chips, potato chips, pork rinds, etc.)
- Fried foods
- Hamburger and hot dogs
- Other foods with high amounts of sugar, fat and/or sodium
Tobacco products:

- Cigarettes
- Cigarillos (little cigars)
- E-cigarettes, e-hookah pens
- Chewing tobacco, Snus
9. Display Ads/Signs Promoting Healthy Foods Near the Checkout

*How to increase your score:*

Place at least one (1) ad, sign or promotion (such as display stands) for healthier food and beverages next to the checkout counter.

Having three (3) or more ads, signs or promotions for healthier food and beverages next to the checkout counter will give you the maximum points possible.

*Place ads for healthier food or beverages in the following locations:*

- Attached or directly next to the checkout counter
- Below the main checkout level (under the register and area where items are placed for purchase)
- On the floor (if standing in checkout isle or next to counter)
- Hanging from the ceiling (directly over register)

*Examples of the types of ads include:*

- Signs and posters with pre-printed advertising (usually produced by the manufacturer, but may have prices hand-written by the local merchant)
- Decals or stickers
- Any other advertising that include a brand name or logo.

Check-out fruit display in a corner store in Lansing, MI

Ice barrel for fresh produce snacks. (Philadelphia, PA)
Examples of healthier foods and beverages include:

**Beverages** with minimal or no added sugar or sweeteners:
- Water
- Fruit juice (100%)
- Non-fat and low-fat 1% milk products
- Unsweetened black coffee

**Foods** with minimal or no added fat, sugars or sweeteners:
- Fresh or dried vegetables
- Fresh or dried fruits (no sugar added)
- Whole grain snacks (≥ 2 g fiber per serving)
- Energy bars (≤ 14 g sugar per serving)
- Granola bars (whole grain, ≥ 2 g fiber, ≤ 1 g saturated fat, ≤ 14 g sugar per serving)
- Nuts and seeds (no trans fats)
- Whole grains
- Beans
- Lean meat, poultry, and fish

**Appendix M: Setting up a Healthy Checkout**
Includes information on how to set up a healthy checkout area, a list of healthier snack and beverage items, different display options (such as display racks and baskets), and information on how to order free “Smart Snack Zone” signs.

**Food distributor advertising:** Some distributors offer in-store advertising to promote their products. Let them know you are participating in the Healthy Retail Project and ask for healthier products for the checkout and in-store advertising to promote these items.

**Have a poster contest** for customers and their children and have them design posters for some of the healthy foods you sell.

**Set up a Healthy Checkout Area.** Create a space for healthy snacks and beverages in the checkout area. Organize the items with signs to draw customers' attention and promote sales. A large healthy checkout area may include many snacks and beverages. A small area may only include a basket of fresh fruit.
10. Remove High Fat/Sugar Foods, Unhealthy Beverages (including Alcohol), and Tobacco from Checkout Area

How to increase your score:

Allow no more than two (2) of the following types of tobacco products and unhealthy food/beverages (including alcohol) next to or below the checkout counter.

Having no (0) tobacco products and unhealthy food/beverages (including alcohol) next to or below the checkout counter AND next to the exit door (for gumball or candy machine only) will give you the maximum points possible.

Remove tobacco and unhealthy food/beverages (including alcohol) from the following locations:

- Attached or directly next to the checkout counter
- Below the main checkout level (under the register and area where items are placed for purchase)
- On the floor (if standing in checkout isle or next to counter)
- Hanging from the ceiling (directly over register).

Examples of tobacco products and unhealthy foods/beverages (including alcohol) include:

High calorie, low nutrient beverages:
- Soda (regular or diet)
- Sweetened beverages (energy drinks, coffee/tea, sports drinks, etc.)
- Shakes
- Liquor and beer

High calorie, low nutrient foods:
- Gumball or candy machine
- Candy (hard or chewy candy, candy bars, gum, etc.)
- Chips and other salty snacks (corn chips, potato chips, pork rinds, etc.)
- Sweet desserts, such as pastries, cookies, and cakes
- Ice cream
- Beef jerky
- Highly sugared cereals (12 or more grams of sugar per serving)
- Fried foods
- Hamburger and hot dogs
- Other foods with high amounts of sugar, fat and/or sodium
Tobacco products:
- Cigarettes
- Cigarillos (little cigars)
- E-cigarettes, e-hookah pens
- Chewing tobacco, Snus

**Carry items that appeal to children.** Parents of small children appreciate shopping in a store where their child is not bombarded by candy and sugary items at the front checkout area. Many behavioral problems, diabetes, and obesity arise from the consumption of too many sugary and other unhealthy foods. Replace unhealthy snacks with healthier options as well as school supplies, stickers, books, and small toys.

**Reorganize to prevent shoplifting.** Many stores place sweet snacks (such as candy) closer to the checkout area to prevent shoplifting. Think about how you can re-organize the store (or front counter area) so you can see the sweet snacks when they are not at the counter.

**Appendix M: Setting up a Healthy Checkout**
Includes a list of single-serving healthier snack and beverage items that can replace unhealthy items at the checkout. Also includes information on how to set up a healthy checkout area, different display options (such as display racks and baskets), and information on how to order free “Smart Snack Zone” signs.
11. Place Healthy Foods in Checkout Area

How to increase your score:

Place at least one (1) of the following types of healthier foods and beverages next to or below the checkout counter.

Having three (3) or more healthier foods and beverages next to or below the checkout counter will give you the maximum points possible.

Place healthier food and beverages in the following locations:

- Attached or directly next to the checkout counter
- Below the main checkout level (under the register and area where items are placed for purchase)
- On the floor (if standing in checkout isle or next to counter)
- Hanging from the ceiling (directly over register)

Examples of healthier foods and beverages include:

**Beverages** with minimal or no added sugar or sweeteners:
- Water
- Fruit juice (100%)
- Non-fat and low-fat 1% milk products
- Unsweetened black coffee

**Foods** with minimal or no added fat, sugars or sweeteners:
- Fresh or dried vegetables
- Fresh or dried fruits (no sugar added)
- Whole grain snacks (≥ 2 g fiber per serving)
- Energy bars (≤ 14 g sugar per serving)
- Granola bars (whole grain, ≥ 2 g fiber, ≤ 1 g saturated fat, ≤ 14 g sugar per serving)
- Nuts and seeds (no trans fats)
- Whole grains
- Beans
- Lean meat, poultry, and fish

Fresh cut and packaged fruit on ice at the checkout counter in a small market. (Santa Rosa, CA)
Create a space for healthy snacks and beverages in the checkout area. Organize the items with signs to draw customers’ attention and promote sales. A large healthy checkout area may include many snacks and beverages. A small area may only include a basket of fresh fruit.

Here are a few examples:

**Wal-Mart** in Shasta County created a “Kids Healthy Choices” display at a register and sales increased, even tripled, for many of the items. They recently added a cold-box containing water, cheese and yogurt next to another registers.

**Trader Joe’s** places baskets near the register and fills them with bags of dried mangos, fruit leather, or nuts for customers wanting an impulse snacks.

Many **small markets** cut and package fresh fruit to sell at the register. Others sell small packs of cherries or berries. You can also sell fresh salsa with a small bag of baked chips.

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**Appendix M: Setting up a Healthy Checkout**

Includes a list of single-serving healthier snack and beverage items that can replace unhealthy items at the checkout. Also includes information on how to set up a healthy checkout area, different display options (such as display racks and baskets), and information on how to order free “Smart Snack Zone” signs.
12. Post Ads for Healthy Foods on Store Exterior

How to increase your score:

Display at least one (1) small AND one (1) medium OR one (1) large professionally-produced advertising of healthier food or beverages on doors and/or windows of the storefront.

Having at least one (1) small, one (1) medium, AND one (1) large professionally-produced advertising of healthier foods or beverages on doors and/or windows of the storefront will give you the maximum points possible.

Ad size is determined using the following guidelines:

- **Small Ads** - same size or smaller than a sheet of paper (8.5” x 11”)
- **Medium Ad** - bigger than a sheet of paper, but smaller than ten (10) sheets of paper together
- **Large Ad** - bigger than ten (10) sheets of paper together

Professionally produced advertisements are usually produced by the manufacturer, but may have prices hand-written by the local merchant. These are ads that depict brands, logos or products and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Signs and posters with pre-printed advertising
- Decals or stickers
- Pull/push and enter/exit signs on glass doors
- Lighted or neon signs
- Branded signs printed by companies that own several chain stores, such as 7/11, Safeway or other chains
- Any other advertising items with a brand name or logo

Door cling and window poster advertising healthier food to the customers of small markets. (Santa Rosa, CA)
**Examples of healthier foods and beverages include:**

**Beverages** with minimal or no added sugar or sweeteners:
- Water
- Fruit juice (100%)
- Non-fat and low-fat 1% milk products
- Unsweetened black coffee

**Foods** with minimal or no added fat, sugars or sweeteners:
- Fresh or dried vegetables
- Fresh or dried fruits (no sugar added)
- Whole grain snacks (≥ 2 g fiber per serving)
- Energy bars (≤ 14 g sugar per serving)
- Granola bars (whole grain, ≥ 2 g fiber, ≤ 1 g saturated fat, ≤ 14 g sugar per serving)
- Nuts and seeds (no trans fats)
- Whole grains
- Beans
- Lean meat, poultry, and fish

**Ask your distributors for ads for the healthy items.** Think about the healthy items you sell in your store. Ask the distributors for free advertising (e.g., banners, posters) to promote these healthy products. Ads that are more colorful and promote fresh, healthy items can make your store look better and attract more customers.
13. Remove Exterior Ads Promoting High Fat/Sugar Foods, Unhealthy Beverages (including Alcohol), and Tobacco

How to increase your score:

Display no more than two (2) small AND (2) medium professionally-produced advertising of tobacco products and unhealthy food/beverages (including alcohol) from doors and/or windows of the storefront.

Having no (0) advertising of unhealthy food/beverages and tobacco on doors and/or windows of the storefront will give you the maximum points possible.

Ad size is determined using the following guidelines:

- **Small Ads** - same size or smaller than a sheet of paper (8.5” x 11”)
- **Medium Ad** - bigger than a sheet of paper, but smaller than ten (10) sheets of paper together
- **Large Ad** - bigger than ten (10) sheets of paper together

Professionally produced advertisements are usually produced by the manufacturer, but may have prices hand-written by the local merchant. These are ads that depict brands, logos or products and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Signs and posters with pre-printed advertising
- Decals or stickers
- Pull/push and enter/exit signs on glass doors
- Lighted or neon signs
- Branded signs printed by companies that own several chain stores, such as 7/11, Safeway or other chains
- Any other advertising items with a brand name or logo

Examples of advertising promoting unhealthy beverages. (Petaluma, CA)

Example of advertising promoting unhealthy foods. (Santa Rosa, CA)
Examples of unhealthy foods/beverages and tobacco include:

High calorie, low nutrient beverages:
• Soda (regular or diet)
• Sweetened beverages (energy drinks, coffee/tea, sports drinks, etc.)
• Shakes
• Liquor and beer

High calorie, low nutrient foods:
• Candy (hard or chewy candy, candy bars, gum, etc.)
• Chips and other salty snacks (corn chips, potato chips, pork rinds, etc.)
• Sweet desserts, such as pastries, cookies, and cakes
• Ice cream
• Beef jerky
• Highly sugared cereals (12 or more grams of sugar per serving)
• Fried foods
• Hamburger and hot dogs
• Other foods with high amounts of sugar, fat and/or sodium

Tobacco products:
• Cigarettes
• Cigarillos (little cigars)
• E-cigarettes, e-hookah pens
• Chewing tobacco, Snus

Stores that are clean, organized, and uncluttered outside tend to attract more customers. Limit the number of ads you display on your windows and storefront and remove old or worn ads, posters, and banners.
14. Accept CalFresh (SNAP/Food Stamps)

How to increase your score:

Participate in the CalFresh Program. The CalFresh Program is California’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps.

SNAP is a federal program offered by the US Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service which provides benefits to low-income people that can be use to buy food to improve their diets.

Recent changes to SNAP have allowed users to purchase more types of healthy items. By carrying more healthy items in your store, and accepting SNAP, you will open your store to new customers.

- **SNAP Vendor Application:** Call the SNAP Retailer Application Hotline at (877) 823-4369 or complete the application online at http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/register.htm.

- **Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Machines:** EBT is an electronic system that allows food stamp recipients to authorize transfer of their government benefits from a federal account to a retailer account to pay for products received. Being a SNAP vendor does not cost you any money if you use the EBT machines. These machines are provided by the state and are easy to use.

- **SNAP Requirements:** In order to become an authorized SNAP vendor, a store must sell food for home preparation and consumption and meet at least one of the following criteria:

  1. Offer for sale at least three different varieties of food in each of the following four staple food groups, with perishable foods in at least two categories, on a daily basis: bread and grain; dairy; fruits and vegetables; and meat, poultry, and fish.

  2. At least 50% of the total sales (e.g., food, non-food, services, etc.) at your store must be from the sale of eligible food staple.

Visit the SNAP website for additional information on eligible food items: www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/eligible.htm

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**CalFresh By The Numbers**

15,954  
Number of Sonoma County residents receiving CalFresh benefits in 2010**

$95,101  
The average CalFresh redemption per authorized vendor (store) in 2008*

54,165  
Number of Sonoma County residents eligible to receive CalFresh benefits**

$88,654,854  
Millions of dollars in additional economic activities generated if all 54,165 residents were participating in CalFresh**


** California Food Policy Advocates. 2010 Sonoma County Nutrition and Food Insecurity Profile.
15. Accept WIC

**How to increase your score:**

Participate in WIC, a federally funded health and nutrition program for women, infants, and children.

WIC helps families by providing checks for buying healthy supplemental foods from WIC-authorized stores. In California, 82 WIC agencies provide services locally to over 1.4 million low-income women, infants and children each month at over 600 sites throughout the State.

If you accept WIC, you would be opening your store to new customers and more profit.

- **California WIC Website:** [www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/default.aspx)
- **WIC Vendor Application:** Call the State of California WIC office at (916) 928-8705 or visit the State of California WIC Grocer/Vendor website to apply: [www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WICGrocerVendorMainPage.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WICGrocerVendorMainPage.aspx)
- **WIC Authorized Food List:** In order to participate in WIC, you must carry certain items in your store, all of which are healthy foods. Review the list of WIC eligible foods and consider carrying some or all of them in your store. Doing so will help prepare you for applying for WIC: [www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WIC-AuthorizedFoodListWAFL.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WIC-AuthorizedFoodListWAFL.aspx)
- **WIC Qualifying Brands:** A list of brands that qualify under the WIC program can be found at: [www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WIC-CAFoodListsDatabase.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WIC-CAFoodListsDatabase.aspx)

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**WIC By The Numbers**

11,756
Number of Sonoma County residents receiving WIC benefits in 2010**

$217,071
The average WIC redemption per authorized vendor (store) in 2008*


** California Food Policy Advocates. 2010 Sonoma County Nutrition and Food Insecurity Profile.
16. Display WIC and CalFresh (SNAP/Food Stamps) Signs

How to increase your score:
Display WIC and/or CalFresh (SNAP/Food Stamps) signage for the programs in which you are participating.

WIC signage: WIC provides the following in-store advertising to help its vendors inform customers of their participation in the program:

- “WIC Authorized” shelf talkers
- “We Accept WIC” posters
- WIC logo decal

If you are a WIC vendor and need to order materials, complete and fax the online form, which can be found at http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/osp/wic/osp508.pdf.

CalFresh (SNAP/Food Stamps) signage: CalFresh requires vendors to post the CalFresh permit near the cash register and provides signage that can be placed on a door or window to inform customers of their participation in the program.

If you are a California CalFresh vendor and need to order materials, call the national CalFresh vendor hotline at (877) 823-4369.

Written EBT (SNAP/Food Stamp) sign in a small market. (Santa Rosa, CA)
17. Comply with Lee Law

**How to increase your score:**

If your store sells alcohol, ensure that no more than 1/3 of the total window area is covered by any type of advertising.

California’s “Lee Law” stipulates that “no more than one-third of the square footage of windows and clear doors (e.g. glass) of an alcohol retailer may have signs of any sort, including all types of advertising.” This state law is intended to prevent crime by providing law enforcement with a “clear and unobstructed view of the interior of the store, including the area in which the cash registers are maintained, from the exterior public sidewalk or entrance to the store.”

(Note: The “Lee Law” does not apply to stores where there are no windows, or where existing windows are located at a height that does not allow for a person standing outside the store to view the interior of the store.)

In addition to being a safety issue, Lee Law will help your store look more appealing. Take time to make sure you remain in compliance with the law.

For a summary of Lee Law requirements, review section 25612.5 of the California Business and Professions Code under the California Law section at www.leginfo.ca.gov, or call the California State Department of Consumer Affairs at (800) 952-5210.

Windows of small market not in compliance with Lee Law.
18. No Bars on Windows

**How to increase your score:**

If permanent bars cover the windows and/or doors, remove them or replace them with chain/bars that roll up or slide to the side during the day.

Bars on windows may deter people from shopping at your store by making it seem unsafe and less attractive. Consider removing the bars to make your store more appealing and to bring in more customers.

Consider alternate security measures such as an alarm, adequate lighting, and motion lights instead of bars to improve security for your business.

Mekong Market façade improvements: removed bars, replaced roof, and added security lighting. (Santa Rosa, CA)
19. Safe and Walkable within Two Blocks of the Store

_How to increase your score:_

Help to improve the walkability (and bikeability) of the neighborhood within two blocks of your store.

**Issues You Can Address**

Many property owners have very little control over the environment more than a block away from their store, but owners may be responsible for maintaining the sidewalk, up to the street, surrounding the store property.

Remember that stores that are clean, organized, well-lit and uncluttered outside tend to attract more customers. Keeping the area around your store clean and safe also helps to promote walking in the neighborhood. The more people that walk by your store, the more business you are likely to get.

Here are a few tips for keeping the area around your store safe and walkable for your customers:

- Remove graffiti immediately
- Pick up trash and gum on the sidewalks
- Plant grass, flowers, or trees around your store and maintain existing green areas
- Limit loitering and panhandling outside your store
- Add lighting, including motion sensor lights
- Create a relaxing, visually appealing environment outside your store by placing attractive chairs and tables for customers outside your store (Note: Check with the city or county to ensure you are not breaking any laws by placing chairs and tables outside your store)
- Check for bad smells or odors around your store and clean them up immediately
- Work with the city or county to repair broken sidewalks, add crosswalks, and address traffic concerns around your store.

**Issues the City and County Can Address**

Public Works: Public Works Departments are responsible for making your community a better place to live “by being responsive, competent stewards of the public infrastructure and environment for the benefit of citizens and visitors.”

Both city and county Public Works Departments welcome input from residents and businesses on improving neighborhoods. They use the information to prioritize infrastructure needs and seek funding.
You can help improve your community by identifying infrastructure issues within a few blocks of your store and inform Public Works. Here are a few walkability (and bikeability) issues they may be able to address:

- No sidewalks, paths or shoulders
- No bike lanes
- Broken or cracked sidewalks
- Sidewalks blocked by poles and signs
- Missing or faded crosswalk striping
- Traffic signals
- Repair or install curb ramps
- Road too wide
- Traffic signals made pedestrians wait too long or did not give them enough time to cross

Before

![Before Image]

After

![After Image]

City of Santa Rosa Public Works Department added a crosswalk and moved the stop out of the crossing zone at an intersection near Lola’s Market. (Santa Rosa, CA)
Employee Training

Making sure that your produce is stacked, iced, misted, and looking great is not always enough to get customers to buy. Your best resource is your staff. If they know how to talk to your shoppers about how to select, store, and prepare fresh produce, customers are much more likely to buy. Once your staff feels comfortable talking about healthy items with your customers, they can begin to “suggestion sell,” meaning that they can suggest additional items for customers to buy that complement their produce selections.

Develop a Training Plan

Training your employees is essential to the success of the Health Retail Project. When employees understand the project and why you are participating, they will be able to answer customer questions and make healthy recommendations. They will also be more invested in the project and may take pride and ownership in creating healthy changes that will benefit the community.

We recommend the following training plan:

Conduct a short (15-20 minute) introduction

Consider discussing the following during the training:

• Why your store is participating in the project.
• Share the positive feelings you have as the storeowner or manager about why participating in the project is important, such as improving the health of the community or for business reasons.
• Explain the changes that are or will be made, such as carrying more produce or healthy food, limiting unhealthy advertisements, and reorganizing the store.
• Explain the difference between healthier food versus unhealthy food.
• Discuss the positive publicity you hope to gain from your participation.
• Show samples of materials that will be displayed, such as recipe cards and posters.
• Discuss special store events that may take place, such as taste tests, food demonstrations, and store tours.
• Allow time for employees to share why the project might be important to them.
• Explain the importance of complying with food safety, alcohol, and tobacco laws.

Photo courtesy of Network for a Healthy California.
Develop a New Employee Orientation

As you hire new employees, you will need to inform them about the program. We recommend the following:

- Provide new employees with an information sheet about your store’s participation in the Healthy Retail Project.
- Inform new employees of your store’s participation in the Healthy Retail Project during their orientation or during the first few days of work.

Give Employees Reminders & Recognition

The following ideas can help energize your employees and contribute to the success of the project:

- Occasionally remind staff about new store changes or promotional events during staff meetings or through regular updates. Doing so can help them stay informed about the healthy changes you are making.
- Consider recognizing employees who have done something outstanding towards the success of the project.

Identify Training Tools

Consider using any combination of the following materials to train staff on produce storage and promotions, and tobacco and alcohol sales trainings.

- **Backroom Posters:** Posters displayed in the backroom can help remind staff how to store produce, decrease spoilage, cull damaged product, and rotate-in new product as necessary. Knowing this storage information will also help them advise customers on how to care for the produce they purchase at home.

- **Produce Quick Tips:** *Produce Quick Tips (PQTs)* are easy-to-carry cards that list helpful selection, nutrition, storage, preparation, and seasonality tips for shoppers. These tips can be used to guide your staff on how to answer shopper questions and make suggestions about their produce choices. See Appendix O for more information about *Produce Quick Tips*.

- **Food Demonstration Guide:** *The Network for a Healthy California* provides training materials for retailers who want to set up taste tests and food demonstrations for fruits and vegetables. The Food Demonstration Guide also includes tips for engaging customers in conversations about produce with the goals of helping them make healthy choices and increasing produce sales.

- **Store Tour Guide:** Depending on the size of your produce department/aisle, the *Network for a Healthy California—Retail Program’s Store Tour Guide* provides tips for your staff on how to take small groups of shoppers on a tour of fresh, frozen, canned and dried fruits and vegetables. These tours can educate shoppers, help them feel more confident about buying more fruits and vegetables, and improve your relationship with them. Don’t have a large produce section? There are also tips on how to give presentations for schools and other community groups that are eager to hear about the healthy items that you provide.

- **Produce Industry Resources:** Check with your grocers association, fruit and vegetable commodity boards and marketing agreements, and other produce marketing groups for on-going training opportunities for your staff. Produce industry magazines and newspapers are also good sources of information that will help your staff handle, display, merchandise, and promote your produce aisle.
• **Responsible Beverage Service Training:** The Sonoma County Department of Health Services coordinates trainings, which cover California Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) laws and regulations, tobacco control laws, local city and county alcohol ordinances, and strategies for preventing sales to minors, such as procedures for checking legally acceptable forms of identification. Trainings may help to improve business vitality, lower insurance premiums, improve customer service and provide a safe environment. All trainings meet the recommended best practice guidelines of the State of California, Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC).

• **Licensee Education on Alcohol and Drugs (L.E.A.D.) Program:** The LEAD Program is a free, voluntary prevention and education program for retail licensees, their employees and applicants. The training classes are offered at a variety of locations throughout the California. The classes include instruction on checking various forms of identification, detecting and preventing illegal activity, reducing liability and much more. Each training class lasts 4 hours. At the conclusion of the class, there will be an exam on the material that was covered. Each person that fulfills all of the training requirements will receive a certificate, via email, certifying that they successfully completed a LEAD training course.

• **Online Tobacco Retailer Class:** The California State Board of Equalization hosts an online class on tobacco control laws affecting tobacco retailers and strategies for preventing sales to minors.

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**Network for a Healthy California’s Food Demonstration Training Kit**


**Network for a Healthy California’s Store Tour Guide**


Contact Healthy Retail Project staff at (707) 565-6680 to schedule a training for your team.
Recognition Program

In order for your store to be recognized for making healthy changes, your store must meet the following criteria annually:

- **Food Safety Requirements:** As a participating store, you must maintain an outstanding commitment to food safety by having NO MORE THAN two minor critical violations OR one major and one minor critical violation on the most recent food safety inspection.

- **Tobacco and/or Alcohol Requirements:** If the participating store is a licensed alcohol and/or tobacco retailer, the participating store must not have any tobacco and/or alcohol violations while participating in the Healthy Retail Project.

- **Store Assessment Scorecard Requirements:** As a participating store, you must raise your Store Quality Score to at least 75 points AND meet the minimum quality score standards in the following three (of four) categories in order to be recognized for *Making Healthy Changes for a Healthier Community:* produce stocked, marketing and promotion, and food assistance.

**IMPORTANT**

Stores that do not meet the food safety, alcohol, and tobacco requirements AND store assessment scorecard requirements during the course of their participation in the Healthy Retail Project will be asked to remove all Healthy Retail Project in-store advertising materials (such as logos, displays, banners) and discontinue marketing efforts using the Healthy Retail Project name and logo until all requirements are met.

**Advertising Packet**

After a store has met the food safety and store assessment scorecard requirements, the store will be given a Health Retail Project advertising packet and promotional materials. The packet will include the following:

- Acceptance Letter
- Project window decals
- Project logo on disc that can be used for store-developed advertising and promotional materials
- Other promotional materials, such as banners and posters

*Note: All promotional materials are in English and Spanish and are available based on funding.*
**Promotion Efforts**

**Media Coverage:** Healthy Retail Project staff will promote participating stores through a press release to local and regional newspapers following the annual/bi-annual store assessments. Stores that meet the food safety AND store assessment scorecard requirements will also be recognized for *Making Healthy Changes for a Healthier Community* during a City Council and/or Board of Supervisor meeting.

**Promotional Efforts:** Project staff may also help promote in-store events to local businesses with worksite wellness programs as well as through partnerships with community clinics and schools.

**Website:** Additional funding is currently being sought for the development of a Healthy Retail Project website, which will list participating businesses.
Evaluation

The goal of the Healthy Retail Project's evaluation plan is to help stores successfully promote healthy food choices. To accomplish this goal, project staff plan to 1) measure healthy changes made at each store, 2) measure the impact of the healthy changes on customer purchases, 3) measure the impact of healthy changes on sales and profitability, and 4) collect information that will help improve the program.

**IMPORTANT**

Healthy Retail Project staff and/or volunteers agree to keep sales, marketing, store operations and information collected during evaluation and technical assistance efforts confidential. Information will be shared only with the Healthy Retail Project staff, partner agencies, and project evaluator. Any public reports generated from our evaluation activities will not include any identifying information about specific individuals or stores UNLESS permission is obtained from store manager/owner ahead of time. All information gathered will be used to identify ways to increase the usefulness, value and financial benefits of this program.

**Manager/Owner Interview**

- **Before Starting the Program:** Managers/owners will be asked about changes they would like to make in their stores, how sales are monitored, the number of customers and transactions per day, vendors used, and existing vendor agreements.

- **One Year After Starting the Program:** Managers/owners will be asked about resources used, perception of the changes in overall sales and profits, changes in sales of healthy foods and beverages, impact of the program on staffing levels, perceived reasons for reported changes, challenges encountered, and recommendations for improving the program.

- **Annually/Biannually:** After participating in the program for one year, project staff will meet with managers/owners every one to two years. Managers/owners will be asked questions similar to those asked “one year after starting the program.”

**Food Environment Assessment**

- **Before Starting the Program:** Project staff will conduct a food environment assessment. The assessment will consider the availability and display of healthy and unhealthy foods; the variety, quality and price of fresh produce; marketing and promotion; and safety and walkability surrounding the store. Photos will be taken to capture the layout of the store. Stores will be given a Scorecard summarizing the findings of the store assessment.

- **One Year After Starting the Program:** Project staff will conduct a food environment assessment approximately one year following program launch. Photos will be taken to capture changes in the layout of the store. Stores will be given an updated Scorecard showing how the changes made over the year impacted the Store Quality Score.
• **Annually/Biannually**: After participating in the program for one year, project staff will conduct a food environment assessment every one to two years. Stores will be given an updated **Scorecard** that can be used to identify areas in the store that meet the **Store Quality Score** minimum standards and areas that need improvement.

**Customer Intercept Survey**

If funding is available, Healthy Retail Project staff will obtain permission from managers/owners to interview a select number of customers as they leave stores. Project staff will ask customers about the products they purchased, how frequently they visit the stores, and more. The goal of the interviews is to determine if healthy changes made by the stores influenced what customers purchased. Stores will be given a one-page report summarizing information gathered from the customer interviews.
Resources

**Alcohol Retailer Resources**

State of California, Alcoholic Beverage Control
The mission of the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control is to administer the provisions of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act in a manner that fosters and protects the health, safety, welfare, and economic well-being of the people of the State. They are responsible for overseeing the licensing, enforcement and regulatory mandates of the State.
Phone: (707) 576-2165
www.abc.ca.gov

County of Sonoma, Department of Health Services, Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Program
Organizes and coordinates the Responsible Beverage Service Training program countywide. Supports local non-profits, educational institutions, and law enforcement in their alcohol and other drug prevention efforts. Staff provide technical assistance to businesses upon request.
Phone: (707) 566-6680
www.sonoma-county.org/health/about/publichealth_alcohol.asp

**Business Associations**

SWABA (Southwest Area Business Association), Santa Rosa
Terry Hilton, Founder & Board Member
terry@swaba.biz

**Business Chambers**

Cloverdale Chamber of Commerce
126 North Cloverdale Boulevard
Cloverdale, CA 95425
Phone: (707) 894-4470
Fax: (707) 894-9568
chamberinfo@cloverdale.com

Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce
217 Healdsburg Avenue
Healdsburg, CA 95448
Phone: (707) 433-6935
Toll Free: (800) 648-9922
Fax: (707) 433-7562
info@healdsburg.com
www.healdsburg.com

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Sonoma County
3033 Cleveland Avenue
Suite 306
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Phone: (707) 575-3648
hccadmin@hcc-sc.org
www.hcc-sc.org

North Bay Black Chamber of Commerce
P.0. Box 15075
Santa Rosa, CA 95402
Phone: (888) 846-5155
Fax: (707) 584-5908
info@nbbc.org
www.socobcc.net

Petaluma Chamber of Commerce
Petaluma Area Chamber of Commerce
6 Petaluma Boulevard North, Suite A2
Petaluma, CA 94952
Phone: (707) 762-2785
Fax: (707) 762-4721
pacc@petalumachamber.com
www.petalumachamber.com

Rohnert Park Chamber of Commerce
101 Golf Course Drive. C-7
Rohnert Park, CA 94928
Phone: (707) 584-1415
Fax: (707) 584-2945
info@rohnertparkchamber.org
www.rohnertparkchamber.org
Food Assistance Programs – Vendor Websites

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
SNAP is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps. It is a federal program offered by the Food and Nutrition Service, which provides benefits to low-income people that they can use to buy food to improve their diets.

SNAP Vendor Application: Complete the application online at www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/register.htm, or call the SNAP Retailer Application Hotline at (877) 823-4369.

WIC (Women, Infant, and Children) Vendor Website
WIC is a federally funded health and nutrition program for women, infants, and children that helps families by providing checks for buying healthy supplemental foods from WIC-authorized vendors.

WIC Vendor Application: Call the State of California WIC office at (916) 928-8705 or visit the State of California WIC Grocer/Vendor website to apply: www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WICGrocerVendorMainPage.aspx

Food Safety Inspection

Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Environmental Health and Safety Section
Results of the most recent food safety inspection can be found here. Food safety inspection results are posted approximately one working day after an inspection.
http://food.sonoma-county.org/foodsearch.htm

Healthy Store Resources

Healthy Corner Store Network
Supports efforts to increase the availability and sales of healthy, fresh, affordable foods through small-scale stores in underserved communities.
www.healthycornerstores.org
**Network for a Healthy California - Retail Program**
Retailers located in qualifying neighborhoods can choose from a wide variety of materials at no cost. Contact the regional specialist to find out if your store qualifies for free materials.

[www.cdp­h.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/RetailProgram.aspx](http://www.cdp­h.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/RetailProgram.aspx)

**Lee Law Requirements**

**California Business and Professions Code 25612.5**

[www.leginfo.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov)

**California State Department of Consumer Affairs**

(800) 952-5210

[www.dca.ca.gov](http://www.dca.ca.gov)

**Locally Grown Produce Resources**

**Sonoma County Go Local**
GO LOCAL is a network of locally-owned businesses, residents, non-profit organizations, and government agencies working together to build a resilient, thriving, local economy by supporting local, independently owned businesses and promoting sustainable practices.

[http://sonomacounty.golocal.coop](http://sonomacounty.golocal.coop)

**Sonoma County Farm Bureau**
(707) 544-5575
[http://sonomafb.org](http://sonomafb.org)

**Buy Fresh Buy Local**
Buy Fresh Buy Local seeks to make it easier for residents to find locally grown or raised food, and to encourage them to support our local treasures: farmers' markets, CSAs, family farms and orchards, and businesses that serve or sell locally grown products.

[www.buylocalca.org](http://www.buylocalca.org)

**California Federation of Certified Farmers' Markets**
Search for Sonoma County farmers' markets where you can buy produce from local farmers to sell in your store.

[www.ca­farmersmarkets.com](http://www.ca­farmersmarkets.com)

**Sonoma County Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)**
These programs connect local farmers or community gardens directly to their surrounding community by allowing families to pay a low fee for regular produce box deliveries throughout the growing season. Some CSA programs may agree to give you a portion of the profits in exchange for promoting the program and encouraging your customers to sign up for produce deliveries. Check with a CSA program in your area to see if a partnership is possible.

[www.igrows­onoma.org/locate](http://www.igrows­onoma.org/locate)

**Marketing Materials**

**Network for a Healthy California**
Free, downloadable retail program merchandising materials from the Network for Healthy California:

[www.cdp­h.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/Retail-Merchandising.aspx](http://www.cdp­h.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/Retail-Merchandising.aspx)

**Whole Grains Council**
Offers a wide range of promotional materials to help inspire everyone to eat more whole grains. Materials include fact sheets, grain of the month graphics, recipes, and handouts (in Spanish and English).

[www.wholegrainsc­ouncil.org/resources/whole-grain-promo-items](http://www.wholegrainsc­ouncil.org/resources/whole-grain-promo-items) (English Only)

[www.wholegrainsc­ouncil.org/resources/pdfs-from-the-whole-grains-council](http://www.wholegrainsc­ouncil.org/resources/pdfs-from-the-whole-grains-council)

**Healthy Recipes**
CA Department of Public Health: Recipes & Cookbooks (English & Spanish)
[www.cdp­h.ca.gov/healthinfo/healthyliving/nutrition/recipes/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.cdp­h.ca.gov/healthinfo/healthyliving/nutrition/recipes/Pages/default.aspx)


Print and Radio Media Resources

Print Media

**Cloverdale Reveille**
207 N. Cloverdale Boulevard
Cloverdale, CA 95425
Phone: (707) 894-3339
Fax: (707) 894-3343
tellus@cloverdalereveille.com
[http://cloverdalereveille.com/home.htm](http://cloverdalereveille.com/home.htm)

**Healdsburg Tribune – Sonoma West Times**
230 Center Street
Healdsburg, CA 95448
Phone: (707) 433-4451
kerri@sonomawest.com
[www.sonomawest.com/the_healdsburg_tribune/](http://www.sonomawest.com/the_healdsburg_tribune/)

**La Voz Bilingual Newspaper**
P.O. Box 3688
Santa Rosa, CA 95402
Phone: (707) 538-1812
Spanish: (707) 292-8027
[www.lavoz.us.com](http://www.lavoz.us.com)

**North Bay Bohemian**
847 Fifth Street
Santa Rosa, CA 95404
Phone: (707) 527-1200
[www.bohemian.com](http://www.bohemian.com)

**North Bay Business Journal**
427 Mendocino Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
Phone: (707) 521-5264
Fax: (707) 521-5269
[www.northbaybusinessjournal.com](http://www.northbaybusinessjournal.com)

**Petaluma Argus-Courier Newspaper**
719C Southpoint Boulevard
Petaluma, CA 94954
Phone: (707) 526-8590
john.burns@arguscourier.com
[www.petaluma360.com](http://www.petaluma360.com)

**Rohnert Park – The Community Voice**
100 Professional Center Drive, Suite 110
Rohnert Park, CA 94928
Phone: (707) 584-2222 x10
[www.thecommunityvoice.com](http://www.thecommunityvoice.com)

**Russian River – Sonoma West Times**
137 South Main Street
Sebastopol, CA 95472
Phone: (707) 823-7845
production@sonomawest.com
[www.sonomawest.com](http://www.sonomawest.com)

**Sonoma County Press Democrat**
427 Mendocino Avenue
P.O. Box 569
Santa Rosa, CA 95402
Phone: (707) 526-8570
[www.pressdemocrat.com](http://www.pressdemocrat.com)

**Sonoma Index Tribune**
117 West Napa Street
Sonoma, CA 95476
Phone: (707) 933-2747
denise@sonomanews.com

**Sonoma Valley Sun**
158 W. Napa Street
Sonoma, CA 95476
Phone: (707) 933-0101
Fax: (707) 933-1573
advertising@sonomasun.com
[http://news.sonomaportal.com](http://news.sonomaportal.com)

**Windsor Times**
9025 Old Redwood Highway
Windsor, CA 95492
Phone: (707) 838-9211
matthew@sonomawest.com

Radio

**Exitos 98.7 FM**
3565 Standish Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95407
Phone: (707) 588-0707
[www.exitos987.com](http://www.exitos987.com)

**KBBF Bilingual Radio**
P.O. Box 7189
Santa Rosa, CA 95407
info@kbbf-fm.org

**KSRO 1350 AM**
1410 Neotomas Avenue, Suite 200
Santa Rosa, CA 95405
Phone: (707) 543-0100
[www.ksro.com](http://www.ksro.com)
Rebate and Loan Programs

PG&E Rebates, Incentives, and Resources
Offers rebates for the repair and purchase of various refrigeration units
www.pge.com/mybusiness/
energysavingsrebates/rebatesincentives/

SAFE-BIDCO - Energy Efficiency Loans
www.safe-bidco.com/loan-programs/
energy-efficiency-loans/

Tobacco Retailer Resources

California State Board of Equalization (BOE)
The BOE implements and enforces the Cigarette and Tobacco Products Licensing program and related tobacco tax laws. The BOE offers in-person and online classes designed to inform, answer questions, and help retailers understand state requirements and their responsibilities as a vendor of tobacco products in California.
Phone: (800) 400-7115
www.boe.ca.gov/sptaxprog/sptretailers.htm

California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program, Retailer Resources
The State agency provides resources, research findings and information on statewide tobacco control issues.
Phone: (916) 558-1784
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/tobacco/Pages/CTCPRetailerResources.aspx
Appendix A:

Customer Surveys
(Source: The Network for a Healthy California-Retail Program’s Retail Fruit & Vegetable Marketing Guide, June 2011)

In-Store Shopper Survey

1. How often do you shop at this store?
- ❑ Once a day
- ❑ 1 – 3 days per week
- ❑ Weekly
- ❑ Monthly

2. What are your views of produce prices at this store compared to other grocery stores where you shop?
- ❑ Excellent
- ❑ Good
- ❑ Same
- ❑ Fair
- ❑ Poor

3. How do you view the produce quality at this store compared to other grocery stores where you shop?
- ❑ Excellent
- ❑ Good
- ❑ Same
- ❑ Fair
- ❑ Poor

4. How do you view the variety of produce offered at this store compared to other grocery stores where you shop?
- ❑ Excellent
- ❑ Good
- ❑ Same
- ❑ Fair
- ❑ Poor

5. What produce items do you buy at other grocery stores compared to this store?

6. What other items would you like to see at this store?
**In-Store Shopper Survey Analysis**

1. **Split the surveys into two groups:**
   - **Group A:** frequent shoppers. These are the people who reported that they shop at our store once a day or daily.
   - **Group B:** occasional shoppers. These are the people who reported that they shop at your store weekly or monthly.

2. **Look at the Group A first, these regular shoppers will have an opportunity to buy the most food.**
   - **Questions 2 and 3:** responses to these questions will help you find out about the value that your customers place on your produce items. If customers think that the quality of your produce is excellent compared to other stores then they will probably see your produce as a valuable item so long as prices are at least the same as other stores. If customers think that the quality of your produce is fair or poor compared to other stores, and they think the prices are also poor (meaning that they are too high) then they don't place a high value on your produce items.

   Before you consider selling new or additional items make sure that most of the surveys rate your produce quality and prices as the same or better than other stores. If they don’t look at what you can do to improve quality (improve your storage, handling, and display practices or switch distributors) and prices (finding different distributors, changing your delivery/pick-up method, improving storage and handling practices to lower your product losses).

   - **Question 4:** once you have a plan in place for maintaining or improving the value of the produce you already sell, look at how well your produce variety is rated. If customers rate your variety as fair or poor, look at question 6 to see what types of produce you should consider adding to your inventory.

   - **Question 5:** look at the most common produce items that customers say they are already buying. If you are considering changing your variety of produce, this information may help you decide which items to keep and which items can be replaced with produce that might sell better.

3. **Don't count out Group B! Look for reasons why these shoppers don't shop with you more often. Review the Group B surveys the same way you reviewed the Group A surveys and find out if there are changes that you can make that would cause these occasional shoppers to become regular shoppers.**
Community Survey

[Store Name] Fruit and Vegetable Customer Survey

Hello. I’d like to ask you some questions about fruits and vegetables and your experience shopping at ______________ store. The questions take about 5 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. No personal contact information about you will be collected. All responses are kept confidential and your individual answers will not be shared with anyone. Are you willing to complete the survey?

Check if customer consents to completing this survey.

☐ Yes  ☐ No

1. How often do you shop at this store?

☐ Once a day  ☐ 1 – 3 days per week  ☐ Weekly  ☐ Monthly

2. How do you view produce prices at this store compared to other grocery stores where you shop?

☐ Excellent  ☐ Good  ☐ Same  ☐ Fair  ☐ Poor

3. How do you view the produce quality at this store compared to other grocery stores where you shop?

☐ Excellent  ☐ Good  ☐ Same  ☐ Fair  ☐ Poor

4. How do you view the variety of produce offered at this store compared to other grocery stores where you shop?

☐ Excellent  ☐ Good  ☐ Same  ☐ Fair  ☐ Poor

5. What produce items do you buy at other grocery stores compared to this store?

__________________________________________________________

6. What other items would you like to see at this store?

__________________________________________________________

7. How much would you estimate you spend on produce for yourself and your family in the average week OR in the average month? (Record amount or check box)

$__________ per average week OR $__________ per average month

☐ Don’t know  ☐ Refused to answer
8. When you purchase fruits and vegetables, do you ever use SNAP (food stamps) Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)? (Check box)

- Yes
- No
- Refused to answer

9. When you purchase fruits and vegetables, do you ever use WIC vouchers? (Check box)

- Yes
- No
- Refused to answer

10. Which, if any, of the following do you think would encourage you to purchase more fruits and vegetables at this store?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Mark appropriate box.)</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. If more fruits and vegetables were sold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. If different fruits and vegetables were sold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. If pre-packaged “snack” bags were sold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> a $1 bag of cherries or grapes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. If pre-packaged “meal kits” were sold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> pre-packaged ingredients for a soup, stir-fry, or casserole</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. The chance to taste free samples of individual fruits and vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Cooking demonstration where a selected produce item was featured in a recipe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Recipe cards for quick, delicious ways to prepare fruits and vegetables at home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Newsletter with information about featured produce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Signs throughout the store encouraging shoppers to purchase fruits and vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Are there any improvements that can be made to the store that would cause you to buy more produce here (such as the quality of other items sold here, lighting, loiterers, etc.)?

Finally, I just have a few questions about you.

12. How far is this store from your home? (Select one)

- On the same block
- A few blocks away — within walking distance
- Within a mile
- Between 1-3 miles
- Over 3 miles

13. How many people are in your household (yourself included)? __________

14. How many children under 18 are in your household? __________

15. Your gender:  

- Male
- Female
Community Survey Analysis

1. Split the surveys into two groups:

- **Group A**: frequent shoppers. These are the people who reported that they shop at our store once a day or daily.
- **Group B**: occasional shoppers. These are the people who reported that they shop at your store weekly or monthly.

2. Look at the Group A first, these regular shoppers will have an opportunity to buy the most food.

- **Questions 2 and 3**: responses to these questions will help you find out about the value that your customers place on your produce items. If customers think that the quality of your produce is excellent compared to other stores then they will probably see your produce as a valuable item so long as prices are at least the same as other stores. If customers think that the quality of your produce is fair or poor compared to other stores, and they think the prices are also poor (meaning that they are too high) then they don't place a high value on your produce items.

Before you consider selling new or additional items make sure that most of the surveys rate your produce quality and prices as the same or better than other stores. If they don't look at what you can do to improve quality (improve your storage, handling, and display practices or switch distributors) and prices (finding different distributors, changing your delivery/pick-up method, improving storage and handling practices to lower your product losses).

- **Question 4**: once you have a plan in place for maintaining or improving the value of the produce you already sell, look at how well your produce variety is rated. If customers rate your variety as fair or poor, look at question 6 to see what types of produce you should consider adding to your inventory.

- **Question 5**: look at the most common produce items that customers say they are already buying. If you are considering changing your variety of produce, this information may help you decide which items to keep and which items can be replaced with produce that might sell better.

- **Questions 7 – 9**: this information will help you estimate how much more money your shoppers could spend if you carried the produce items that they are looking for. If you are currently deciding whether or not to apply to be a WIC or Food Stamp vendor, this information will also help you estimate how much you can earn in sales if you provided this service to your customers.

- **Question 10**: this information will help you create a produce merchandising and promotion plan. Consider the top three or four activities that customers said would cause them to buy more fresh produce as a starting point to promote any new changes that you are planning for your produce aisle.

- **Question 11**: this question gives customers a chance let you know about other things that they could do to improve their shopping experience. Pay close attention to any issues that are brought up multiple times, and keep your eye out for any new ideas or suggestions that you haven’t thought of yet.

- **Questions 12-15**: these questions will give you a little more information about your shoppers, how far they are willing to travel, and if they have children. This information may be helpful in planning future promotions for your store.

3. Don’t count out Group B! Look for reasons why these shoppers don’t shop with you more often. Review the Group B surveys the same way you reviewed the Group A surveys and find out if there are changes that you can make that would cause these occasional shoppers to become regular shoppers.
Appendix B

Selecting a Produce Distributor

(Source: The Network for a Healthy California-Retail Program’s Retail Fruit & Vegetable Marketing Guide, June 2011)

Picking a produce distributor should be a strategic business move. Evaluate the quality of the distributor’s fruits and vegetables, their customer service, and price. Pick a distributor that can be flexible to your business needs whether you are looking for small produce deliveries or larger quantities of produce that you pick yourself.

Wholesale Distributors: Wholesale Distributors may carry a large variety of produce at a low price. Check if they have any added value programs, meaning that they may offer promotional materials for certain products or additional training on handling and display. Find out if they can sell amounts small enough for your store and if they have any delivery or pick-up restrictions. Many distributors may have a Will Call program for ripe, ready-to-eat fruit at a lower cost. This can be a great deal, but only if you would be able to sell the produce before it goes bad. Some wholesale distributors may also be able to set up a produce box program very similar to the community supported aquiculture programs described below.

Farmers’ Markets: Check out your local farmers’ market to see if you can get a good price for your produce selections and some additional training on how to handle and promote your selections. Farmers’ markets will allow you to buy less produce and you can also tell your customers you know the person who grows the fruits and vegetables that you stock! Check with your County Farm Bureau (http://sonomafb.org/) or the California Federation of Certified Farmers’ Markets (www.cafarmersmarkets.com) to find the Farmer’s Markets or farmers that grow specific items in your area.
**Community Supported Agriculture Programs:** If you are not sure about having the space to display produce in your store, look into Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs. These programs connect local farmers or community gardens directly to their surrounding community by allowing families to pay a low fee for regular produce box deliveries throughout the growing season. These programs usually deliver the produce boxes to a central location in the community that is easy for residents to get to. Consider becoming an official drop-off site for your community. Some CSA programs may agree to give you a portion of the profits in exchange for promoting the program and encouraging your customers to sign up for produce deliveries. Check with a CSA program in your area to see if a partnership is possible. You can find a list of CSAs on the iGrowSonoma website (www.igrowsonoma.org/locate).

**Find a Partner**

If you are concerned about delivery fees or find that the deal you want would require ordering more produce than you can sell, consider partnering with other independent retailers or restaurants in your area. When you work with one or more partners, you can combine your produce orders to get a lower cost and cut down on delivery fees. Look within your community or grocers association to find other retailers that can help increase your buying power and lower prices by sharing bulk orders.

**Delivery or Pickup**

Consider how frequently you’ll need to restock your produce. Once a week, twice a week, three or more times a week? All this will depend on how much produce you can sell before it goes bad. Can you afford the convenience of a delivery, or would you prefer to pick up? These decisions will help you find the vendor that is best for you. If you are able to set up a delivery service, make sure to confirm with the vendor at what temperature they store the produce and at what temperature it will be when you receive it. Schedule deliveries at times when you or your staff can stop what they are doing to check and store the produce while it is still cold.
Appendix B

Replaceable Local Distributor List

This page intentionally left blank for a replaceable local produce distributor list.
This page intentionally left blank for a replaceable local produce distributor list.
Appendix C

Produce Storage Mapping, Receiving and Stocking Tips
(Source: The Network for a Healthy California-Retail Program’s Retail Fruit & Vegetable Marketing Guide, June 2011)

**Produce Storage Mapping**

There is a lot to remember when it comes to storing fresh produce. One way to keep track of it all is to make a storage map for your refrigeration and dry storage areas. The diagram below is an example of how a storeowner might map out his or her storage space to prepare for new produce items.
Map Your Storage Space

Have all the tables and charts left you thinking that you need three refrigerators and two pantries to carry produce? Not to worry, this activity will help you practice how you can plan to store produce items while paying attention to ethylene, storage temperatures, odor absorbers, moisture, and ice. If the diagram above represented a small retailer’s refrigeration unit and dry storage area:

- The first thing they should do is decide which items do not require refrigeration. Items like tomatoes and potatoes can become damaged in cold temperatures and should be kept in dry storage.
- In addition, the produce that should be kept coldest should be near the refrigerator fan, while items that should be kept at slightly warmer temperatures can be kept near the door.
- Items that are either very heavy or packed in ice, should be stored near the floor, but at least 6 inches off the ground. That way, melting ice won’t drip on other items, and staff can avoid straining themselves to place heavy items on the shelf.
- Items that absorb odors can be kept on the opposite wall of an item that has a strong smell.
- Items that make a lot of ethylene can be stored in open containers so that they don’t ripen too quickly.
- Other items that are sensitive to cold or moisture loss can be covered with a blanket.

With this in mind, can you figure out a way to stock the following items in the diagram above?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apples</th>
<th>Cabbage</th>
<th>Mushrooms</th>
<th>Sweet Potatoes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bananas</td>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>Onions</td>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>Lettuce</td>
<td>Oranges</td>
<td>Yellow Squash</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Answers

Dry Storage

Tomatoes, bananas, sweet potatoes, and onions should not be refrigerated. Remember that tomatoes and bananas make a lot of ethylene, so make sure the dry storage area has good air circulation and that the tops of the tomato and banana boxes are opened enough to let the ethylene escape.

Cold Storage

- Assuming the carrots and corn were shipped in ice, they should be on the bottom of the storage area so that water from the melting ice can drain properly.
- The oranges and yellow squash may be heavy and require storage on the floor to avoid crushing other items or injuring staff. They also need slightly warmer temperatures, so they can be kept closer to the refrigerator door and covered with a clean blanket to prevent chill damage.
- The cabbage, lettuce, mushrooms, corn, and carrots should be kept cooler than the squash and oranges. So they are placed closer to the fan. If there is concern about these items drying out, they can be covered with a clean sack or blanket.
- While apples need to be kept cool too, they produce ethylene, which may cause the carrots, lettuce, cabbage, and mushrooms to spoil over time. They are kept near the cooler but on the opposite wall. This also works since the mushrooms, lettuce, and cabbage can be stacked high to avoid being crushed and to be near the cooler fan. The apples should also stay on the opposite wall because cabbage and carrots can absorb odor from apples over time.

This is just one of many possible stocking choices. The important thing to remember is that mapping your storage space can save stocking time and help you keep your produce items fresher longer. If you find that items are going bad quickly, reviewing your storage map could be the first step in finding out how you may be able to fix the problem (assuming that the produce was not already damaged upon delivery).
**Receiving and Stocking Tips**

(Adapted from an article written by Armand Lobato of Produce Merchandising Magazine)

Follow this general, ten-step process to properly prepare for, receive and handle an incoming produce delivery.

1. **Prepare the backroom.** Get rid of trash, stack empty boxes and condense merchandise to make room for the load.

2. **A place for everything, and everything in its place.** You can create maps of your refrigerator space to find out where the coldest (usually near the fan) and warmest (usually near the door) spots are located to help you store your produce at the right temperature for the best flavor and the least spoilage. Keep items in the same place each day so you can quickly find needed product. When unloading the truck, try to park items in set areas to minimize handling them multiple times.

3. **Know your temperature zones.** When picking up or receiving a produce delivery, accept only produce items that are within the temperature ranges above. Otherwise they may not last as long in storage or on display.

4. **Maintain the “cold chain”.** Cold stuff stays cold, warm items, such as bananas, get stacked off outside of cooler. Packaged salads lose a day’s shelf life for every hour kept out of refrigeration. Bananas and pineapples sustain chill damage easily, and stone fruit has “kill zones” if kept too cold or too warm. Basic storage knowledge will help minimize waste and maximize profits.

5. **Handle with care!** Never throw or drop produce. This can cause damage and shrink. Be careful not to subject fragile items, such as berries or mushrooms, to crushing. Dropping a box of apples as little as three inches can drastically decrease their shelf life and increase waste. Inspect items as you put them away for signs of damage. If you see a produce item that you would not buy, neither will your customers!

6. **Rotate items using the First-In-First-Out (FIFO) method.** Place newer items below or behind older items so that you can be sure to rotate all of your produce inventory out onto the sales floor before it goes bad. When stacking cases, make sure the printing on the outside of boxes is visible so you know what is being stacked where. This will make selection a breeze and save valuable time.

7. **Dating keeps track of aged inventory.** Cartons have a way of overstaying their welcome, so by marking cases with a received-on date (either with a marking pen or price gun) you can see at a glance which items must be moved first.

8. **A clean ship is a happy (and safe) ship.** Stack away empty pallets, dump the trash, sweep and mop the floor.

9. **Check the load you just put away.** Did everything arrive as ordered, compared to your invoice? This is the time to note outages or shorts and make adjustments with your supplier or warehouse.

10. **The final inspection.** When a load is put away, step into the cooler and dry storage area and ask these questions:
    - Is everything accessible? Can I quickly tell which apple varieties are which? Which shelf holds chilies? Which shelf has cabbage?
    - Are the items in the cooler rotated and dated?
    - Are sensitive items protected (i.e. nothing heavy crushing boxes of grapes, mushrooms aren’t being dried out by the fan, are the banana lids off to slow ripening)?
    - Is the storage area safe? Free from excess water or debris, and well lit?
Appendix D

Produce Storage Guidelines
(Source: The Network for a Healthy California-Retail Program’s Retail Fruit & Vegetable Marketing Guide, June 2011)

Storage Temperature
Different produce items require different storage temperatures to maintain good quality, which will improve sales. Keep the following storage chart in mind when selecting produce items.

Important: Do not refrigerate the items marked with an asterisk (*). Cold temperatures may damage flavor and texture.

Note: If you only have one refrigerator, you can store Group A and Group B items together in a 40°F refrigerator (which is cool enough to store dairy, eggs, or meat if you sell these items as well). Because this temperature is a little warm for Group A items and a little cool for Group B items, they will not last as long, so you might want to have more than one produce pick-up or delivery a week. Group C items can be stored in a well-ventilated, air-conditioned room.

Optimal Storage Temperatures for up to Seven Days of Storage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruit</th>
<th>Group A: 32-35°F</th>
<th>Group B: 45-50°F</th>
<th>Group C: 55-64°F Or an air conditioned room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apples</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bananas*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avocados (unripe)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Papayas*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avocados (ripe)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grapefruit</td>
<td>Watermelon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantaloupe</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lemons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherries</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mangos*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oranges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiwifruit</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pineapples*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nectarines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Peaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pears</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persimmons</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Plums</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberries</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Optimal Storage Temperatures for up to Seven Days of Storage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group A: 32-35°F</th>
<th>Group B: 45-50°F</th>
<th>Group C: 55-64°F Or an air conditioned room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>Chili Peppers</td>
<td>Onions*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>Eggplants</td>
<td>Potatoes*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>Green Beans</td>
<td>Sweet Potatoes*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
<td>Okra</td>
<td>Tomatoes*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celery</td>
<td>Zucchinis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collard Greens</td>
<td>Yellow Squash</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kale</td>
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<td>Lettuce</td>
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<td>Mushrooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parsnips</td>
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<td>Spinach</td>
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<td>Swiss Chard</td>
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<td>Spinach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swiss Chard</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Ethylene**

Ethylene is a natural gas made by some fruits and vegetables. Ethylene causes certain fruits and vegetables to ripen faster, which can lead to over-ripening and spoilage. For this reason, you want to be careful that ethylene producing items are kept away from ethylene sensitive items and that your storage and display areas have good ventilation. Spoiled produce makes even more ethylene (one bad apple spoils a bunch)!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethylene producing fruit and vegetables</th>
<th>Keep away from…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apples</td>
<td>Asparagus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avocados</td>
<td>Broccoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bananas</td>
<td>Cabbage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantaloupe</td>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nectarines</td>
<td>Celery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papayas</td>
<td>Chayotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaches</td>
<td>Collard Greens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pears</td>
<td>Grapefruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plums</td>
<td>Green Beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>Kale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important:</td>
<td>Kiwifruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lemons</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lettuce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mangos</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mushrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Okra</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oranges</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Persimmons</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Potatoes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spinach</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spinach</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watermelon</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yellow Squash</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These fruits and vegetables are sensitive to ethylene and should be stored away from ethylene producing produce.
**Odor Absorbing Produce**

Some produce items can absorb bad odors or flavors from other produce items. For this reason, you want to keep certain items away from each other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Odor absorbing fruit or vegetable</th>
<th>Keep away from...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apples</td>
<td>Onions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avocados</td>
<td>Bell Peppers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>Apples and Pears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>Apples and Pears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celery</td>
<td>Apples, Carrots, Onions, Pears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>Onions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mushrooms</td>
<td>Onions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onions</td>
<td>Apples and Pears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Apples and Pears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Apples and Pears</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Icing**

Some produce items can tolerate being iced and may be delivered packed in crushed ice. While this is not a requirement, it is important to know if your produce distributor delivers any of the following items packed in ice when you are making your storage plans so that you can be sure you have adequate drainage for melting ice. Produce items that can tolerate (but do not require) icing include:

- Artichokes
- Carrots
- Celery
- Parsnips
- Asparagus
- Cauliflower
- Collard Greens
- Spinach
- Broccoli
- Cantaloupe
- Corn
- Kale

**Prepackaged Produce**

Packaged fruits and vegetables offer a convenience to the consumer; however they require special handling, storage, and display considerations. Damage to one apple within a three-pound bag due to improper handling, storage, or display can affect the others resulting in faster spoilage of the whole bag of apples. It is important to scan bags or packages as they are delivered or picked up and reject those that have rotten pieces. As they are stored and displayed, continue to check for spoiled pieces and throw away bags or packages with rotting produce items as necessary.
Consider the following when choosing equipment to help display produce items:

- The size of your store may limit the amount of produce you can sell. You may need to make some hard decisions about moving other products around to make room for it.
- Make sure produce displays are visible and easy for shoppers to see and reach.
- Make sure that your store electrical wiring is up to date. Most refrigeration units use 220-volt outlets. Find the unit that is compatible to your outlets.
- Buying used equipment is tempting, but newer models may be more energy efficient and keep your monthly electricity bill down. Do some research on how much it will cost to have the unit plugged in 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Do not unplug refrigeration displays or units at night if they still have produce in them! The produce needs a constant temperature to stay fresh.
- Be careful when considering getting loans for expensive equipment. Review your business plan to be sure you would be able to pay back the loan. Otherwise look for grants and other incentives that help retailer strengthen their business model, make upgrades to the store exterior, or retrofit appliances.
- If you are looking for used equipment, try appliance stores that carry refurbished merchandise.

Remember, not all produce needs to be refrigerated. Consider baskets or display islands for items that can be stored and displayed at room temperature.
There are a variety of display options for produce that can be displayed at room temperature. Sometimes, simple is best, especially if you do not have a lot of room. These baskets have a false bottom so that they look full when they are actually half empty.

Here are examples of simple register displays created by a corner store that offers healthy snacks to their WIC participants*. These cash register displays sell quickly, so the ethylene created by the bananas and apples should have less of an affect on the oranges, lemons, and limes.
Before you invest in any equipment to help promote your produce items, check out a few sources of additional support. Various grant and rebate opportunities can be found through:

- **PG&E Rebates, Incentives, and Resources**
  Offers rebates for the repair and purchase of various refrigeration units.

- **SAFE-BIDCO - Energy Efficiency Loans**

- **California Business Portals**
  [www.sos.ca.gov/business](http://www.sos.ca.gov/business)

- **The California Economic Development Partnership**
  [www.labor.ca.gov/cedp/default.htm](http://www.labor.ca.gov/cedp/default.htm)

- **Grants.gov**
  [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)

- **Change Lab Solutions**
  [http://changelabsolutions.org/healthy-planning](http://changelabsolutions.org/healthy-planning)

Small business loans are available through the Small Business Administration and private lending organizations. Before applying for a loan, be sure to plan out how your produce sales can help pay back the loan plus interest. If you cannot find out how to make a loan work, try grants and other resources.

*Images courtesy of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.*
Appendix F

Produce Display Considerations
(See Appendix D for Produce Storage Guidelines)
(Source: The Network for a Healthy California-Retail Program’s Retail Fruit & Vegetable Marketing Guide, June 2011)

Temperature and Turnover

Produce lasts longer if it is displayed at a temperature that is close to its storage temperature. Be sure not to display produce items on the ground. Not only is it unappealing, but the ground temperature can heat up the produce items and cause them to spoil faster. Most refrigerated, open air display cases are not powerful enough to cool down warm produce items, so make sure the produce items are already cold before placing them in the case.

Some items have a short shelf life and should be sold within three days. Other items should be sold before seven days. Remember that produce loses flavor before it looks bad. Selling good tasting produce brings customers back for more. The goal is to sell fresh produce as soon as possible and to restock regularly.

Produce items that should be kept in refrigerated display cabinets and sold within 3 days:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artichokes</th>
<th>Cauliflower</th>
<th>Grapes</th>
<th>Strawberries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asparagus</td>
<td>Celery</td>
<td>Green Beans</td>
<td>Swiss Chard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>Cherries</td>
<td>Lettuce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bok Choy</td>
<td>Collard Greens</td>
<td>Mushrooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>Spinach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you do not have refrigerated storage or display, you should not attempt to sell these items. Displaying produce in a bed of ice without refrigeration is not an effective way to keep them cold.
**Produce items that should be kept on display tables or racks at room temperatures, sold within 7 days, and protected from direct sunlight and drafts:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Produce Items</th>
<th>Produce Items</th>
<th>Produce Items</th>
<th>Produce Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apples</td>
<td>Grapefruits</td>
<td>Onions</td>
<td>Plums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avocados</td>
<td>Jicama</td>
<td>Oranges</td>
<td>Potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bananas</td>
<td>Kiwifruit</td>
<td>Papayas</td>
<td>Sweet Potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell peppers</td>
<td>Lemons</td>
<td>Peaches</td>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantaloupes</td>
<td>Mangos</td>
<td>Pears</td>
<td>Watermelons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggplants</td>
<td>Nectarines</td>
<td>Pineapples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once items like kiwifruit, nectarines, peaches, pears, and plums fully ripen, they can be kept in the refrigerated displays with “Ready to Eat” signage.

**Misting (optional)**

Some produce items go bad because they dry out too quickly. These items would benefit from regular misting while on display. Misting can help double the shelf life of certain produce items and give produce a fresh, crisp look. Be careful not to soak these items with water. Misting these items for 6-8 seconds every 6-8 minutes is recommended if you have access to a refrigerated display case with an automatic misting system. Produce items that benefit from regular misting are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Produce Items</th>
<th>Produce Items</th>
<th>Produce Items</th>
<th>Produce Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artichokes</td>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>Collard Greens</td>
<td>Parsnips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
<td>Kale</td>
<td>Spinach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>Celery</td>
<td>Lettuce</td>
<td>Swiss Chard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you do not have access to refrigerated misting equipment, these items will benefit being sold in clamshell containers or plastic bags, which can help prevent them from drying out. Other items can be damaged by misting, so if you are not carrying and selling enough of the items listed above to justify purchasing misting equipment, then making that kind of investment is not recommended.
**Keep Dry**

Keep the following produce dry to prevent early spoilage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Produce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiwifruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oranges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jicama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acorn Squash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persimmons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broccoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nectarines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pineapples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chayotes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Considerations About Leafy Products**

If you choose to carry leafy produce, be sure that you have room for trimming, soaking, and crisping these items (lettuces, kale, collard greens, cabbage, etc.). This does not have to take a lot of space, but it is a vital process that will revive wilted leafy green produce items and almost triple their shelf life.

1. Cut a thin slice off the bottom of the stalk or core, making sure not to cut so deep that items like cabbage or heads of lettuce fall apart. Remove any damaged or discolored outer leaves.

2. Soak the items in lukewarm water for about 15-20 minutes.

3. Drain and place back in the refrigerator to cool before displaying.

You can prep an entire box of leafy greens using a trashcan for the trimmings and bucket of drinkable water for soaking. You’ll be amazed at how much these three steps can refresh your leafy green inventory!

**Organic Produce**

The optimal storage conditions are the same for both organic and conventional (non-organic) produce. The storage-life for organic produce may be shorter than conventional produce if conventional items are treated to limit decay or waxed to reduce water loss. The main concern in handling of organic produce is to keep it separate from conventional produce so that there is no possibility of mislabeling the organic produce. It is best to use separate display areas for the organic produce.
**Stacking**

When putting produce on display, make sure that it is not stacked so thickly that air cannot circulate. If stacking produce in a refrigerated display case, do not stack items so high that the top layer of produce is exposed to warm air. Delicate produce items should not be stacked more than two layers deep so that the bottom layer is not bruised, crushed, or damaged.

**Rotation**

Check your produce items a few times a day as you are going about your other duties in the store. Throw away any bruised, damaged, foul smelling, or shriveled items (this process is also called culling). It is hard to throw away inventory, but if you don’t, your customers may not buy anything because their attention will be drawn to the damaged produce in your display and not the good quality items. Be sure to restock whenever the display starts to look empty. Empty displays look picked over and unappealing. Remember to stack older produce in front or on top of the newer items so that it sells first (FIFO). To preserve inventory, avoid bruising by handling gently, controlling temperature, misting where appropriate, and stacking carefully.
Appendix G

Produce Display Tips
(Source: The Network for a Healthy California-Retail Program’s Retail Fruit & Vegetable Marketing Guide, June 2011)

Display Tips (Adapted from articles written by Armand Lobato of Produce Merchandising Magazine)

How to Dummy Up a Display

Even in the busiest stores there are displays that simply do not turn quickly for a variety of reasons, such as having too much space or misallocation of the space provided. While this is not a problem with “hardware” items (like onions, potatoes, winter squash, or watermelons), highly perishable items, such as tomatoes or berries, require several turns a day to remain fresh.

If you keep only a layer or two on display, the product will stay fresh, but the customer may think that there is a lack of selection, which brings sales down. So the goal is to look full without using a lot of product. One way to do this is to “dummy up” your displays. In this example, we’ll look at the process of dummying up a display of tangerines.

When you dummy a display, you are replacing good product with a false bottom made of material that is of little value. You will want to create a display that appears full, is easy to work with, and helps turn your product quickly. This will help keep displays looking fresh, which maximizes sales and decreases shrink (i.e., inventory losses).

An Overflowing, 16-case display? No, an abundant looking, less than eight-case creation. This display is only three layers high, but thanks to the dummied effort, appears larger, which triggers increased sales.

Bottoms Up! — By using original shipping cartons that would otherwise be thrown away, a nice false base is built. Note how the inner box is trimmed and turned upside down so the first layer of fruit will begin near the top of the box.
Five Steps to Dummy Up a Display

1. Consider how much you would sell. If you didn’t have to worry about rotation or shrink and your display was kept ideally full throughout the day. Suppose this came to eight cartons of tangerines. Compare this to the amount actually on display. If you have a base of eight cartons to form the foundation of the display and another eight cases are piled on top to make the rest of the display, you’re using 16 cartons of produce to sell only eight.

2. Build up your base. If it’s a bulk display, you can create a foundation with a variety of materials: crushed paper, foam, inverted crates—anything that builds up the base and minimizes the amount of merchandise actually on display. In the tangerine photo, shipping cartons are used, cutting, and turning the box upside down so no product is in the base of the display.

3. Stock the display. Following the typical FIFO routine of new product on the bottom and rotating older stock on top to fill the display to the desired height (delicate items should not be stacked more than two layers deep). Note how less product is needed while the result is an abundant appearance.

4. Cull and rotate frequently. With a dummyed display, product will be fresher and sell quickly. Keep up the image of fullness with constant attention, rotating with each stocking trip, which requires less labor with such a shallow base.

5. Maintain the fresh-built look. In our box-on-table example, replace cartons that become old or damaged. Try to use cartons of the same color or design, placed tight and level with labels up and facing the same direction. Attach price and merchandising signs and keep bags handy.

Wet Rack Considerations

Wet racks (a.k.a., green racks or vegetable racks) come in all styles and sizes but the function remains the same; to display vegetables in a refrigerated case, most of which supply a misting system. If you don’t have the space or the money for a wet rack, review Produce Display Considerations (See Appendix F) to find alternative ways to carry produce items that are sensitive to moisture loss.

1. Have a plan for space allocation. Ideally, a wet rack is torn down and cleaned weekly, one end to the other. The best night to do this is usually the day before your ad circulars go out so the set-up person can adjust the produce items for changes published in the ad circular. With a plan in hand for where everything goes, the rack set-up can begin.

2. Have items prepped. This is an important step. By having items prepped (i.e., washed & trimmed) the night before, valuable time is saved and the race to get the rack set before the store opens is manageable. Typically these items include head and leaf lettuces, greens, celery, green onions, and cabbage. Additionally any items packed in ice should be washed, banded, and ready to go.

3. Lay out fresh product, enough for a layer or two. Take a look at how much older product you have to re-work. You may need more or less new product to begin, but always put a new layer down first (FIFO). Keep in mind “dummying” some areas may be necessary for slow-moving items (use waterproof materials to dummy wet rack displays).
Finally, walk your rack. Ask yourself if the rack has WACCS, is the Water (misting system) right? Is Air circulation okay? Are Color breaks good? Do Categories make sense? Can customers Shop it easily? Then take pride in your work!

4. **Re-work older product on top.** This doesn’t mean try to sell old product that is no longer good (if you wouldn’t buy it for yourself, don’t stock it). This is simply a reminder to rotate. And be sure air can circulate through your display (poor air flow can lower the effectiveness of your refrigeration unit, raise temperatures, and cause spoilage). Throw away any un-saleable product.

5. **Fill to a visually-appealing “level.”** “People buy with their eyes,” and any display looks more appealing when everything is fresh. A level display is like beautiful landscaping, complete with a neat, clean appearance.

6. **Clean up your mess.** Take boxes to the back, adjust or turn off water misters, and re-arrange merchandising signs as needed (as well as any price changes). Hang bags and twist-ties, wipe down mirrors and chrome, then sweep and mop the floor.

7. **Remember the Ice Age.** Consider sprinkling some ice on the items that come top-iced to begin with; partly because it’s good for the items and partly because it’s visually appealing. Also, give the rack a light sprinkling with the hand-watering hose. Items that do not benefit from misting may spoil if they get wet. They should be kept separate from the sections of your wet rack that are misted.
Closing a Produce Aisle for the Night

Because some retailers have more refrigeration than others or are open 24 hours, these examples can change the how-to closing duties. Each store’s closing procedure will vary, and what follows is but one example.

1. Mid-afternoon: start by stocking. At this point you’re a long way from the closing bell, but knowing what the end result of your work should look like makes it easier to work toward that end. Keep up stock levels and rotate every display faithfully. Typically the closer will work on prioritized tasks such as keeping banana, lettuce, and tomato displays full as these key items tend to sell fastest. Follow by replenishing ad displays, then end caps and all the displays in between. With the wet rack, the procedure is the same – working to keep the fresh produce rotated, full, and level.

2. Early evening: timing the closing procedure. It takes some experience to know when to say when, time the stocking so displays will sell down to manageable levels. Typically the strategy for highly perishable items is to keep the display fresh but not overly full, taking care to straighten and cull so as to not lose potential late-night sales.

3. Evening: know what to do at closing time. The usual process is for the closer to pull selected items such as berries and grapes as well as vegetables such as asparagus, peppers, or leaf lettuces. No matter what you pull, be sure to handle each item carefully. Don’t overfill crates and stack items neatly in the cooler to avoid damage.

4. The ‘golden hour’: 60 minutes before the store closes. Typically, this is the quietest stretch of the shift when most of the stocking is completed and there are few shoppers. This is the perfect time for the closer to do one final straightening and culling of the entire produce aisle. This gives the opening staff the best situation to walk into.

5. After closing: preserve and protect. The store is now closed, and the closer has a half hour to pull product and finish up. Most owners will also have the closer perform other duties, such as cover potatoes to avoid greening, make sure the lid is off the banana cases or prepare the backroom for an upcoming load by organizing the cooler, dumping old boxes, and sweeping up. Depending on the time allotted, a closer may also do prep work for the following morning such as trimming and crisping wet rack items for the next day.
Appendix H

Signage and Educational Materials
(Source: The Network for a Healthy California-Retail Program’s Retail Fruit & Vegetable Marketing Guide, June 2011)

Attractive signage helps your produce section look fresh and attractive. Consider what kinds of signage and educational materials you can fit in your store without making the produce section look too cluttered.

Shelf Talkers

Shelf talkers can do more than just let a shopper know how much a produce item costs, they can also give shoppers ideas on how to prepare an item or just make the item look more attractive through the use of photography. Another way to help shoppers select produce is to label ripe produce as “Ready to Eat” so that they know they can eat it when they get home or within a day or so.

Posters

Posters can brighten up your storefront or your produce section by reminding shoppers that fresh produce is an important part of a healthy life and happy family. Try to change signage seasonally to keep your store looking fresh.
**Floor Stands or Kiosks**

Posters and recipe cards are great eye-catching merchandising tools. Consider using floor stands, countertop sign holders, or spinning kiosks to hold posters and take-away items like recipe cards or newsletters containing cost-saving and/or produce selection tips.

**Recipe Cards**

Recipe cards that highlight your produce items are a great way to help customers feel more confident about buying fresh fruits and vegetables to prepare at home. Recipe cards are also a great way to push ripe produce like posting a recipe for banana bread by some bananas that are beginning to brown.
**Newsletters**

Newsletters are a great way to teach your shoppers how to select, store, and prepare the items they find at your store. Consider displaying newsletters near the front door or the produce section. If you or your distributor knows the farmer who grew the produce, newsletters are also a good way to tell shoppers about the person who grew their food and help them feel more confident about buying your produce.

**Cross Merchandising Signage**

You can’t always stack items that go well together in the same area. Help customers learn all the easy ways they can eat more fruits and vegetables every day by using signage that suggests how to mix and match different items for a fast meal or snack. This signage can go in your other aisles to remind shoppers to check out your produce selections (e.g. a sign by the oatmeal asking shoppers to try topping it with chopped apples and raisins).

**Clings**

Bring attention to your customers that your store carries fresh fruits and vegetables. Allow your customers to make informed buying decisions in the frozen fruits and vegetables sections.
**Wobblers**

These cross-promotional wobblers provide preparation tips in every aisle and remind shoppers that fruits and vegetables are a delicious part of every meal.

![Wobblers Image](image)

**In-Store Radio**

Enjoy the use of our 30 or 60 second in-store radio spots. These spots remind customers to pick up plenty of fresh, tasty fruits and vegetables for their families every time they shop.

**Low-Cost and Free Signage and Educational Materials**

**Low-Cost Materials**

Many of the materials described above are available on the Network for a Healthy California’s website at a low cost (plus freight/handling and sales tax):


**Free**

Stores located in qualifying neighborhoods may be able to receive Network for a Healthy California signage and educational materials for free. Contact Healthy Retail Project staff at (707) 565-6680 to see if your store qualifies.
Appendix I

In-Store Promotional Activities

(Source: The Network for a Healthy California-Retail Program’s Retail Fruit & Vegetable Marketing Guide, June 2011)

Product Sampling

Taste Tests

If you are carrying fruit or vegetables that are great for snacking (carrots, grapes, etc.) a simple taste test can go a long way to let your customers experience the excellent quality of produce you have decided to carry and to give them ideas on quick snacks to serve their family. With taste tests, a little goes a long way!

Provide up to 100 shoppers with a healthy treat that shows off your fresh and canned fruit! It only takes:

- 8 grapefruit
- 4 cans of tropical fruit cocktail (in 100% juice), drained
- 4 cans of pineapple chunks (in 100% juice), drained

Provide up to 100 shoppers with a new way to snack on cucumbers! It only takes:

- 8 large cucumbers, washed and sliced
- 1 boxes of reduced fat whole wheat crackers
- Chili powder

Provide up to 100 shoppers with a sample of your leafy greens! It only takes:

- 1.5 pounds of washed spinach
- 2 bags of dried cranberries or raisins
- 1 bottle of balsamic vinaigrette dressing
**Food Demonstrations**

If you have the space inside or outside of your store, you can take a taste test to the next level by holding a food demonstration. A food demonstration is when you actually prepare a healthy fruit or vegetable recipe so that your customers feel more comfortable with the idea of buying more fruits and vegetables to prepare at home. Keep it simple with recipes that require very little equipment (like smoothies). Both taste tests and food demonstrations are a great way to promote the other items that you carry in your store.

**Other Community Activities**

If you are planning your promotional activity near a holiday, choose a fun theme that your customers will enjoy. Choose a fruit or vegetable that relates to the holiday to put on sale or to be part of a display (e.g., sweet potatoes for Thanksgiving or small “lunch box” apples for back to school week). Find ways to decorate your produce aisle for the selected theme and help your shoppers have healthy celebrations.

You can also work with your local American Diabetes Association, American Cancer Society, or American Heart Association to let your shoppers know about health observances and educate them on how to prevent serious health problems by eating the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables every day.

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<th>Month</th>
<th>Holidays and Celebrations</th>
<th>Health Observances</th>
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<td>January</td>
<td>Happy Healthy New Year</td>
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<td>Family Fit Lifestyle Month</td>
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<td>February</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>Cesar Chavez Day</td>
<td>National Nutrition Month</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>Easter (sometimes in March)</td>
<td>National Cancer Control Month</td>
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<td>May</td>
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<td>September</td>
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**Working with Nearby Organizations**

If your store is close to a school, library, or other community-based organization, consider teaming up to host a contest or other small marketing event that will promote your produce aisle.

**Sales Flyers and Coupons**

Create coupons or flyers to pass out before the day of your promotional activity.
Appendix J

Harvest of the Month

The Harvest of the Month program was developed to help stores promote the sale of seasonal produce (fruits and vegetables) that are grown in Sonoma County. Stores can use laminated signs, community newsletters, recipes, and price tags to promote the sale of Harvest of the Month produce. Here’s how the program works:

• Stores interested in participating in the Harvest of the Month program contact Healthy Retail Project staff at (707) 565-6680 to sign up for the program.

• The last week of each month, participating stores will be mailed a Harvest of the Month marketing packet. The packet will include: laminated signs for the upcoming month’s Harvest of the Month fruit and/or vegetable and, if available, community newsletters, recipe cards, and laminated price tags.

• Beginning on the first of each month, stores will begin selling and promoting the Harvest of the Month fruit and/or vegetable. Participating stores are asked to sell the Harvest of the Month produce item for a minimum of one week per month.

• Approximately one week before the end of the month, the next month’s Harvest of the Month marketing packet will arrive at the store.
**Marketing Materials**

**Produce Signs**

The produce signs highlight the Harvest of the Month fruit and/or vegetable and provide customers with useful information, such as serving ideas and storage tips. They are available in two sizes (5”x7”) and (8.5”x11”) and are laminated in order to protect the signs from moisture. The signs can be used to promote the sale of fresh, frozen, canned or dried Harvest of the Month fruits and/or vegetables.

Stores can also download the Harvest of the Month produce signs at the Network for a Healthy California website: www.cdpH.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/RetailMerchandising.aspx.

**Community Newsletters**

Newsletters are a great way to teach your shoppers how to select, store, and prepare Harvest of the Month fruits and vegetables. Consider displaying newsletters in the produce section or near the Harvest of the Month fruit and/or vegetable being sold.

Stores can also download the community newsletters at the Harvest of the Month website: www.harvestofthemonth.cdpH.ca.gov/download.asp.

**Recipe Cards**

Recipe cards are a great way to help customers feel more confident about buying and preparing the fruit or vegetable at home. Recipe cards can also help promote the sale of other store items, as recipes always require other ingredients.

Stores can also download the healthy English & Spanish recipes at the following websites:

- CA Department of Public Health: Recipes & Cookbooks
  www.cdpH.ca.gov/healthinfo/healthyliving/nutrition/recipes/Pages/default.aspx
- Network for a Healthy California: Champions for Change Recipes
  www.cachampionsforchange.net/en/Recipes.php
- US Department of Agriculture: SNAP-Ed Connection Recipe Finder
  http://recipefindernal.usda.gov/
Appendix J

Replaceable Sonoma County Harvest of the Month Calendar

This page intentionally left blank for a replaceable Sonoma County Harvest of the Month Calendar
This page intentionally left blank for a replaceable *Sonoma County Harvest of the Month Calendar*
The following seasonal produce guide includes a list of 100 fruits and vegetables commonly grown in California and the United States. The list includes a calendar of when each produce item is in season. Information for the guide was developed by the Produce Marketing Association (www.pma.com).

### PMA Availability Guide

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Appendix L

Food Councils, Boards, and Commissions

Food councils, boards or commissions want to provide customers with information about their products. One way they do this is giving stores free marketing materials, such as signs and information cards, which can be used to promote sales. The following is a list of known California and National councils, boards and commissions that may have information your store can use to promote the sale of healthy products.

**Beans**
- American Dry Bean Board: www.americanbean.org

**Dairy**
- Dairy Council of California: www.healthyeating.org

**Fruits**
- California Figs: www.californiafigs.com
- California Pears: www.calpear.com
- California Strawberry Commission: www.calstrawberry.com
- National Watermelon Promotion Board: www.watermelon.org

**Meat & Protein**
- American Egg Board: www.aeb.org
- California Fisheries and Seafood Institute: www.calseafood.net
- California Poultry Industry Federation: www.cpif.org

**Vegetable**
- California Avocado Commission: www.avocado.org
- California Cherry Advisory Board: www.calcherry.com
- National Onion Association: www.onions-usa.org

**Whole Grain**
- Wheat Food Council: www.wheatfoods.org
- Whole Grains Council: www.wholegrainscouncil.org
Appendix N

Produce Quick Tips

How To Use Produce Quick Tips

Produce Quick Tips (PQTs) are portable guides that highlight a variety of popular fruits and vegetables. These tips can be used in multiple settings to educate shoppers through interactive activities and promotions like food demonstrations or store tours. While PQTs are easy to carry to multiple events and activities, the goal is to study and retain the information so that there is no need to flip through them while interacting with customers.

PQTs were developed to address a number of challenges to eating the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables every day voiced by consumers — taste, time to prepare, cost, and fear of waste.

Go to www.cachampionsforchange.net/en/Produce-Quick-Tips.php to download individual PQT cards or the complete set.

Avocados

**Shopper’s Tips**
- Look for avocados that give slighty to gentle pressure. Firm avocados can be ripened at home for use later in the week.
- Avoid avocados that are very soft.

**Fun Facts!**
- Avocados came from Central America over 7,000 years ago.
- European sailors once used avocados as their form of butter.

**What Is In It For You?**
- Half an avocado:
  - A source of fiber, vitamin K, folate, vitamin C, vitamin B6, and potassium.

**Serving Ideas**
- Add diced avocados to your favorite salad.
- Replace mashed avocados for mayonnaise in sandwiches.

**Peak Season**
California grown varieties, available all year
may be fresher and cost less than varieties shipped from other regions.

**Storage**
Let hard avocados ripen on a countertop or place in a paper bag for two to three days at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe avocados for up to three days.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Stamp Program
California Department of Public Health KIT-640/Rev. 03/08
**Avocados**

**Shopper's Tips**
- Look for avocados that give slightly to gentle pressure. Firm avocados can be ripened at home for use later in the week.
- Avoid avocados that are very soft.

**Fun Facts**
- Avocados came from Central America over 7,000 years ago.
- European sailors once used avocados as their form of butter.

**What Is In It For You?**
Half an avocado is:
- A source of fiber, vitamin K, folate, vitamin C, vitamin B6, and potassium.

**Serving Ideas**
- Add diced avocados to your favorite salad.
- Replace mashed avocados for mayonnaise in sandwiches.

**Peak Season**
California-grown varieties, available from winter to summer, may be fresher and cost less than varieties shipped from other regions.

**Storage**
Let hard avocados ripen on a countertop or place in a paper bag for two to three days at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe avocados for up to three days.

**Peak Season**
This section provides information on California peak seasons for each type of produce. Produce may be more affordable and flavorful during the peak season than at any other time of the year.

**Storage**
The storage guidelines help consumers plan ahead so that they can avoid waste and experience optimal flavor with each fruit and vegetable selection.

**Fun Facts**
- This section provides facts about the origin, naming, or folklore of a particular fruit or vegetable. These facts can serve as interesting conversation starters for consumers to share with family and friends.

**What Is In It For You?**
This section provides a quick list of the nutrients found in about one cup of each fruit or vegetable. The last card in the PQT set is a Benefits of Fruits and Vegetables card that summarizes the health benefits of the nutrients listed in this section.

An excellent source of a nutrient means that the amount of the food described (in this case, about 1 cup) contains at least 20% of the daily value of that nutrient.

A good source of a nutrient means that the amount of the food described contains 10% – 19% of the daily value of that nutrient.

**Serving Ideas**
This section offers quick preparation tips that save time and deliver excellent results. Please note that the first tip listed is usually represented as the photo on the front of the card.
Healthy Retail Project
490 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 202
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
Phone (707) 565-6680
Fax (707) 565-6619

A Project of the Community Activity and Nutrition Coalition of Sonoma County