CHAMPIONS for CHANGE™

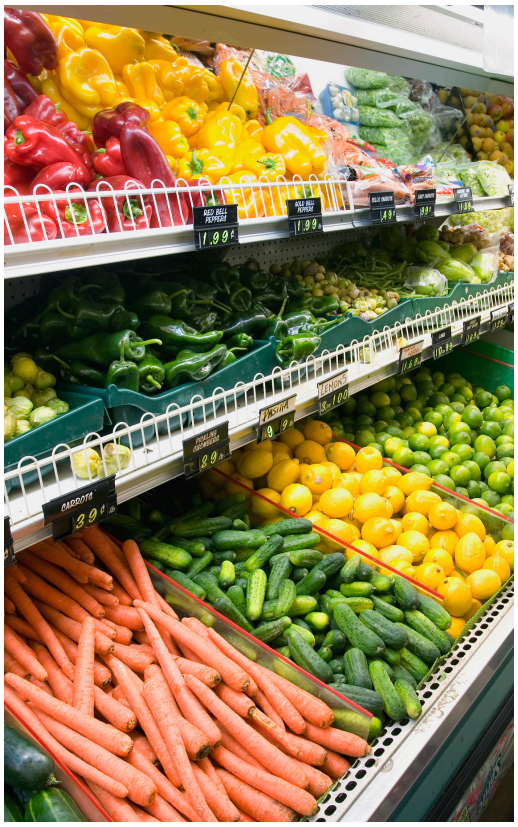
Taking Stock

Creating Healthy Changes at Grocery Stores and Small Markets

For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. Funded by USDA SNAP-Ed, an equal opportunity provider and employer. Visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net for healthy tips.

Local health departments can help grocery store owners improve the availability, quality, and cost of healthy foods they sell – working in partnership with community-based organizations and neighborhood residents.

Depending on your goals, there are many ways to work with store owners to achieve healthy changes in grocery stores and small markets.



THE *CX³* TOOL MEASURES HEALTHY CHANGE.

The *CX³ tool* lets communities survey their strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in obesity prevention. *CX³* stands for *Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention.* The tool was developed for community use by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch.

- "*CX³ community indicators*" are best practices for healthy change (also called "standards of excellence").
- The "*CX³* community indicators" in the following tables can help measure grocery store and small market improvements, over time.

This fact sheet can also be used by health departments that have not conducted a *CX³* assessment but share the goal of improving the food retail environment.

***CX³* Community Indicators**	**How Can Local Health Departments Work With Store Owners and Community Partners?**
MORE AVAILABILITY Improve the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods.	
Does the store sell a variety of: • Fresh fruits? • Fresh vegetables? • Other healthy foods?	***Survey customers*** **to learn what fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods they** ***would buy.*** **Consider using:** • Customer comment cards. • A board with a list of new healthy products, so customers can check off which items interest them. **Identify distributors that offer stores a variety of fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods. Ask distributors to:** • Carry more *healthy food choices* (like low- or reduced-sodium beans). • Make healthy choices easy to find at the warehouse, or featured on order forms. ***Create more space*** **in the store to add healthy foods.** • Adjust shelf height and add new shelves or coolers. • Only display two rows of the same product on a shelf (move extra items to storage). • Remove slow-selling items and replace them with healthy choices. **Ask the store to always** ***stock a minimum amount*** **of:** • Fresh fruits and vegetables. • Low-fat dairy. • Whole grains. • Low- and reduced-sodium items. **Introduce new healthy products one or two at a time. Provide serving suggestions and special offers.** • *Suggest ways* for customers to enjoy more fruits and vegetables. • Offer *pre-cut salad, stir fry, or soup kits.*

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BETTER QUALITY Improve the quality of fruits and vegetables sold in the store.	

Does the store sell good quality:
• Fresh fruit?
• Fresh vegetables?
	Trouble shoot *problem spots* with fruit and vegetable *handling.*
	
	***Contact the distributors* who sell food to the store. Ask what technical help and resources the distributors can offer store owners.**
	
	Ask the store to stock fruits and vegetables in season, when possible.
	• Check whether there is a Farm to Fork network in your area.
	• See if there is a *food hub* that gets fruits and vegetables from local growers operating in your area.
	• Consider ordering fruits and vegetables for stores directly from local farms.
	
	Identify ways to use overripe vegetables in value-added products *for sampling*—for example, freezing bananas to use in smoothies.
	
	Replace old *refrigerators* with energy efficient ones.
	• Ask if your local utility company offers:
	  ○ Rebates or credits for energy efficiency upgrades.
	  ○ Resources for making energy efficiency store improvements.

AFFORDABILITY Ensure that local customers can afford healthy food options.	
Does the store offer: • Good prices for fresh fruits and vegetables? • CalFresh/SNAP acceptance? • WIC acceptance? • Posters and signs about using CalFresh and WIC?	**Encourage the store apply to accept *SNAP* (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or *WIC* (Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children).** • Display signs for *CalFresh* and *WIC*. **Ask *CalFresh and WIC participants* what products they want to buy.** ***Contact distributors* who sell food to local stores.** • Identify distributors with the best prices for quality products. • To keep prices low, select fruits and vegetables in season. **Offer *temporary discounts* on popular healthy items, such as:** • Buy 1, Get 1 Free (BOGO). • Customer loyalty cards. • Student or senior discounts. • Holiday or special event kits and sales (like a Fourth of July BBQ kit, Thanksgiving meal kit).
PRODUCT PLACEMENT Promote healthy choices at checkout and in the store.	
Does the store offer a checkout area: • With healthy foods? • Free of high-fat, high-sugar foods?	**Create a *Healthy Checkout Lane.*** • Display fruit in baskets at checkout. • Make a smart snacking zone near the checkout. • Consider pre-cut fruits and vegetables in grab-and-go containers. • Display "healthy" toys for sale near the cash register, like jump ropes or balls that promote physical activity. • Move high-fat, high-sugar choices away from the checkout area. • Move ads for unhealthy foods, tobacco, and alcohol away from the checkout area. **Display healthy foods prominently in the store.** • Display fruits, vegetables, and other healthy items near the front of the store or in other prominent locations. • Use end cap displays at the ends of rows to promote healthy products where there is visibility and traffic. • Remove unhealthy (high-sugar, high-fat) items from the eye level of children, when possible.

CX³ Community Indicators	How Can Local Health Departments Work With Store Owners and Community Partners?

HEALTHY MARKETING

Showcase available healthy choices in the store.

Does the store:

- Offer health information near fresh fruits and vegetables?
- Remove in-store ads that promote high-fat, high-sugar items?
- Displays in-store ads that promote healthy foods?
- Use tools from the *Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch—Retail Program*?

Work with the store to remove ads that promote high-fat, high-sugar items. Promote healthy foods instead.

- Replace ads for high-fat, high-sugar items with information about fruits, vegetables, and other healthy food items.
- Hang *shelf talkers* and other educational materials near fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Promote seasonal fruits and vegetables with *Harvest of the Month resources* and retail signs.
- Invite the store to participate in the *Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch—Retail Program* to get a variety of tools, resources, and outreach activities.

Clearly display prices and information about sales.

Offer special events to promote healthy foods, such as taste tests or cooking demonstrations.

- Promote new snack items with activities at local schools or recreation centers.
- Consider organizing a *community event* to celebrate healthy changes. Invite community leaders and ask residents to speak about what the changes mean to them.

Promote healthy changes in the store to the community:

- Local news, TV, and radio
- Community-based organizations
- Neighborhood e-lists and list servs (like Yahoo! Groups)

ATTRACTIVE AND SAFE STORE EXTERIORS

The storefront reflects the healthy choices that are available inside.

Does the outside storefront:

- Display ads for healthy foods?
- Avoid ads promoting high-fat, high-sugar foods?
- Comply with *Lee Law* limits on ads on windows of stores with an alcohol license?
- Replace bars on store windows?
- Display fruits, vegetables, and healthy options in front of the store?

Remove unhealthy advertising from outside storefront.

- If the store has a liquor license, ensure that the owner complies with California's *Lee Law*. (The store may not cover more than 33% of windows with signs or ads).
- Post ads for healthy foods on outside storefront.
- Ask the local planning department if your city allows food sales outside the store (this is called "sidewalk encroachment").

Organize community improvement events.

- Organize a mural painting project to promote healthy foods.
- Plan a community clean-up day inside and around the store.
- Organizie a community event to plant trees, shrubs, and/or flowers in front of the store.

Apply for *grants and loans* to improve the outside storefront ("façade improvements"), such as:

- Wash and/or paint storefront.
- Hang banners, replace awnings, and more.

Remove bars from store windows. Replace them with solid security gates.

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WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

Local residents can safely walk or bike to the store.

Is the area around the store:

- Safe and walkable within two blocks of the store?

Use *Safe Routes to School* approaches that support walking and bicycling if youth visit the store.

- Contact the city planning department to request improvements that make it safer for kids to walk, bike, or roll to school, including:
  - Sidewalk repairs.
  - New crosswalks.
  - Street lights.
  - Traffic calming measures, and more.
- Ask your city how to install a bike rack.
  - Some cities offer funding for bike racks.
  - If the bike rack is on public property, you may need an "encroachment permit" (city permission to use the sidewalk).
- Ask customers what changes they would like to see to make the neighborhood safer for kids.

Make improvements in front of the store to make it easier and safer for kids to be physically active.

- Request that the city repair broken sidewalks near the store.
- Consider working with the store owner or landlord to install pedestrian-height lighting on the outside storefront. This can make the store more visible and improve safety.
- Talk to the local police department about ways the store owner and community partners can improve safety.
- Install a garbage can in front of the store. If the garbage can is on public property, you may need an "encroachment permit" (city permission to use the sidewalk).

Reach out to other merchants. There is power in numbers!

- Consider asking other neighborhood businesses to establish a merchants association.
- Talk to the local business improvement district or chamber of commerce about healthy changes in the neighborhood.

Resources

ChangeLab Solutions: Changes in the WIC Package: A Toolkit for Working with Neighborhood Stores
www.changelabsolutions.org/publications/WIC-toolkit

ChangeLab Solutions: Green for Greens
www.changelabsolutions.org/publications/green-for-greens

ChangeLab Solutions: Health on the Shelf
www.changelabsolutions.org/publications/health-on-the-shelf

***CX³*—Tool to survey community health**
Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/CX3_Main_Navgation.aspx

The Food Trust: Sell Healthy Guide
http://foodfitphilly.org/FOODFITPHILLY/assets/File/Sell%20Healthy%20Guide%281%29.pdf

Healthy Corner Stores Network
www.healthycornerstores.org

Healthy Food Access Retail Portal
http://healthyfoodaccess.org/

National Good Food Network
www.ngfn.org

Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch—Retail Program: Fruit & Vegetable Produce Handling Guide
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Documents/Network-FV-RP-ProduceHandlingGuideFPFC.pdf

Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch—Retail Program: Merchandising Materials
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/RetailMerchandising.aspx

Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch—Retail Program: Produce Marketing Guide
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/retailfruitandvegmarketingguide.aspx

California FreshWorks Fund
www.cafreshworks.com

Healthy Food Financing Initiative
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/resource/healthy-food-financing-initiative-0

California Department of Food and Agriculture Farm to Fork
www.cafarmtofork.com

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Photo by Tim Wagner for HEAC (page 5).