

<b>Topic:</b>	Healthy Communities; Food Deserts
<b>Resource Type:</b>	Planning Documents and Policy Statements
<b>State:</b>	Minnesota
<b>Jurisdiction Type:</b>	Municipal
<b>Municipality:</b>	Minneapolis
<b>Year (adopted, written, etc.):</b>	2012
<b>Community Type - applicable to:</b>	Urban; Suburban
<b>Title:</b>	Minneapolis Healthy Corner Store Program
<b>Document Last Updated in Database:</b>	March 12, 2018

### ***Abstract***

The Minneapolis Health Department conducted studies which concluded that impoverished areas, and particularly communities of color, had less access to healthy produce within the City. These communities most often use corner stores for daily food purchases, and these stores rarely have fresh produce for sale. As a result, these communities often have disproportionate health risks.

The Minneapolis Health Department teamed up with corner store owners to improve access to fresh produce and healthier foods. The program's objectives are to (1) increase the inventory of affordable fresh produce varieties in corner stores, (2) increase visibility of fresh produce in corner stores, (3) increase store owners' knowledge about handling fresh produce, and (4) increase sales of fresh produce in corner stores.

The Minneapolis Health Department first sought out grocery experts from local colleges, universities, and health organizations to procure an operations manager. The manager's duty was to create relationships with the store owners and to educate store owners on the skills necessary to procure and handle fresh produce, as well as how to help customers choose healthier food options. These innovative marketing and labeling techniques were designed to attract and educate customers, and included: signs and display baskets to draw customers' attention to healthy food options, training on proper handling to maximize produce shelf life, \$200 stipend to use toward the first order of produce, and promotional events to introduce residents to the store's improvements.

In an evaluation of the program several years after its implementation, store owners reported an increase in the sales of produce and a growing demand from customers for fresh produce. The evaluation stated that it was essential to the success of the program to have a grocer expert, to build relationships with the store owners, and conduct period assessments of the store (staff made bi-weekly visits for the first six months of the program).

### ***Resource*** **Background**

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Each day in Minneapolis, fewer than one in three adults consume the recommended number of fruit and vegetable servings. This statistic is particularly troubling in light of existing health disparities. Although communities of color in Minneapolis are smaller subgroups of the population, these groups experience disproportionately high rates of obesity and chronic health conditions. Lack of access to healthy foods, transportation barriers, higher prices associated with fresh and healthy foods and an overabundance of unhealthy convenience foods contribute to the increasing prevalence of obesity.

For residents unable to travel to grocery stores and farmers markets, corner stores are often the most convenient places to purchase staple foods. To ensure that corner stores provide basic staple foods, the Minneapolis City Council passed a staple food ordinance in 2008 requiring Minneapolis corner stores to carry five varieties of perishable produce in their stores.

### **Program Goals**

As part of its overall goal to increase access to healthy foods in low-income communities and ultimately, consumption of healthy foods, MDHFS developed the Healthy Corner Store Program to support store owners in making healthy foods and fresh produce more visible, affordable, and attractive to neighborhood residents. Specifically, project goals included:

- Increase inventory of affordable fresh produce varieties in corner stores.
- Increase visibility and attractiveness of fresh produce items in corner stores.
- Increase store owners' knowledge about handling and marketing fresh produce items.
- Increase sales of fresh produce items in corner stores.

The Minneapolis Healthy Corner Store Program can be found here:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@health/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-123879.pdf>

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/health/living/new%20cornerstores>