November 27, 2016

Dear Store Owner:

The name “c-stores” reflects your role as community stores, not simply corner and convenience stores. Your stores are regularly places for members of your communities to gather, as well as to purchase fuel and food. The NC General Assembly has provided funding to help small stores like yours supply your communities with healthier food options by reimbursing your store for refrigeration, freezers, and stocking equipment for these foods. We would like to invite you to join in this North Carolina initiative to support the health of your communities by improving access to healthier foods in your region.

A portion of House Bill 1030, The NC Healthy Food Small Retailer Program (HFSRP), was funded specifically to provide reimbursements for refrigeration, freezers, shelving, and stocking equipment to each participating c-store that meets the following criteria and is selected for the 2017 pilot program:

- Accept or agree to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits
- Accept or agree to apply to accept Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits
- Have no more than 3,000 square feet of heated floor space
- Be in a food desert (to determine whether you meet this criteria, link to http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx and enter your address, or call Melissa Walter, HFSRP Program Coordinator, at 919.707.3117)

Additionally, your store must be located in one of the following Eastern NC counties in which this program will be piloted: Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Columbus, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Edgecombe, Franklin, Gates, Granville, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Johnston, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Nash, New Hanover, Northampton, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Pitt, Robeson, Sampson, Tyrrell, Wake, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Wilson, Vance.

Why should you participate?
Market research indicates that “53% of consumers said they would visit c-stores more if healthier foods were more available.”¹ This provides a significant opportunity for you to support your communities with healthier foods—and to support your bottom lines with increased food sales.
In fact, **stores that simply added display kiosks making produce the focal point of the store resulted in a 60% increase in produce sales.** In addition:

- Your store will be provided with guidelines on how to increase sales simply by stocking foods in the right places in your store.
- Your store will be provided with options of stocking and refrigeration equipment meeting the requirements set by the NCDA&CS, and you will retain permanent ownership of the equipment with a two year commitment to meeting the program guidelines.
- Equipment will include integrated signage with the GotToBeNC logo, as well as marketing and educational messages highlighting “better for you” foods.
- Your store will receive support in sourcing fresh and local foods, as well as in purchasing healthier snacking and meal options for your customers.
- **Your store will contribute to the economic health of your community by supporting local farmers and food manufacturers, as well as by providing an option for your residents to spend their money in their own community.**
- **Your store will contribute to the short- and long-term physical health of your community by increasing the availability and access to healthier foods, which can contribute to lower rates of obesity and chronic disease.**

Thank you for your interest in the North Carolina Healthy Food Small Retail Program, designed specifically to support small c-stores (community stores) just like yours. We look forward to working with you to support the health of your community!

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**Melissa Walter**, Program Coordinator, Healthy Food Small Retailer Program
*Melissa.Walter@ncagr.gov*

**Angela Johnston**, Outreach Coordinator, Healthy Food Small Retailer Program
*Angela.Johnston@ncagr.gov*

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
919.707.3117

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**REFERENCES**


APPLICATION/LETTER OF INTENT

Stores that meet the criteria noted in the letter of introduction may submit this Letter of Intent indicating your interest and ability to participate in the Healthy Food Small Retailer Program (HFSRP), as well as how you intend to utilize the equipment provided to improve the food environment in your community. This application does NOT obligate you to participate in the program, but will allow us to talk with you further about your interest and to answer any questions you have. Letters should be postmarked on or before December 31, 2016. Awards will be made on or before February 15, 2017. Please mail applications to:

NCDA&CS Healthy Food Small Retailer Program, 1020 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-1020

Name of store: _____________________________________________________________
Address of store: ____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
County in which store is located: ________________________________________________
Name of store owner: __________________________________________________________
Name of store manager/decision maker, if different from owner: __________________________
Phone number of decision maker: ________________________________________________

Hours of store operation:

Mon: _____________________  Tues: _____________________
Wed: _____________________  Thur: _____________________
Fri: _____________________  Sat: _____________________
Sun: _____________________  Open 24/7: ______________

Do you currently accept SNAP? □ yes  □ no

If no, are you willing to apply to accept SNAP? (requirements: http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retail-store-eligibility-usda-supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program) □ yes  □ no

Do you currently accept WIC? □ yes  □ no

If no, are you willing to apply to accept WIC? (requirements:
http://www.nutritionnc.com/wic/pdf/2016WICMinimumInventoryRequirements101716.pdf and
http://www.nutritionnc.com/wic/pdf/forms/DHHS3282NCWICVendorApplication-0916.pdf)
□ yes  □ no

Has the store ever been required to pay a penalty to, or disqualified or withdrawn from, SNAP or WIC?
□ yes  □ no

Are you located in a food desert per locater map? (http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx and enter your address, or call Melissa Walter, HFSRP Coordinator, or Angela Johnston, HFSRP Outreach Coordinator; at 919.707.3117)  □ yes  □ no

What is the heated square footage of your store? ________________________________________________________________
Why are you interested in participating in the Healthy Food Small Retail Program? ____________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
If not addressed above, how do you envision your involvement in this program leading to improvements in your community?
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Does your store currently partner with any healthy food or food access organizations (health department, Extension agent, YES!, others)?  □ yes  □ no
If so, please list partners and how you work together:
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Does your store currently purchase foods from any local farms/farmers?  □ yes  □ no
If so, please list farms with which you have worked, and what types of items you have purchased.
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Are you willing to adjust the placement of products sold in your store, with support from HSFRP representatives as well as evidence-based guidelines, to improve sales of healthy foods?  □ yes  □ no
Are you willing to provide the NCDA with data on food purchases for your store and/or food sales in your store?  □ yes  □ no

(As a part of the HFSRP, the NCDA is required to assess the increase in sales of healthy foods and report on this data, in aggregate with all stores, to the General Assembly.)

If you are selected to participate in the HFSRP, are you able to finance the purchase of your equipment, knowing that you will be reimbursed by the NCDA&CS?  Or will you require financing assistance?
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________