The St. Louis Healthy Corner Store Project team approach is user-friendly, as noted by Aziz Hamed, owner of Regal Meat Market, a participating corner store. “Getting started was not difficult at all. The project has helped to attract new people into my store and we’re selling more fruits and other healthy items.”

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How the St. Louis Healthy Corner Store Project works:

Here is what you can expect once you have been selected to participate in the project:

• A Neighborhood Leadership Team, made up of residents and stakeholders, will support your efforts, assist in identifying customer healthy food preferences, and encourage support of your store. Your involvement with this team is vital to the success of this project.

• You will be paired with a HCS mentor with grocery retail experience who will provide technical assistance and support.

• Your mentor, along with HCS team members, will meet with you to conduct an initial assessment of the products you currently stock, discuss challenges you face, and identify ways to improve your store.

• Following the initial assessment, you will work with your mentor to develop a store action plan that will outline concrete action steps to improve your store and attract new customers.

• The HCS Project will provide various signs, prompts and materials to highlight the healthy choices in your store. In addition, several promotional events, such as taste tests, will be held in your store.

• Current and potential customer feedback is important. There will be several opportunities for community members to share their healthy food preferences and provide general feedback.

The St. Louis Healthy Corner Store Project can help you:

• Promote healthy eating in your neighborhood.
• Attract new customers.
• Add new products to your inventory.
• Improve merchandising and marketing.
• Build a relationship with your neighbors and customers.

What does it mean to be a Healthy Corner Store?

Corner store participants agree to sell healthy foods and create a healthy store environment. The following are criteria to participate:

• Regularly stock (some, not all required):
  ° Fruits and vegetables (fresh, canned, and frozen).
  ° Low fat dairy.
  ° Whole grain, shelf stable products (i.e., cereal, crackers, rice).
  ° Healthy beverages (i.e., 100% fruit juice, water).
  ° Healthy snacks (i.e., pretzels, granola bars).
• Already accept or apply to accept food stamps/EBT.

Benefits for Corner Stores:

Healthy Corner Store Project participants will receive the following benefits:

• You will be paired with a HCS mentor who will provide support in store layout, merchandising, pricing and promotion.
• The St. Louis Healthy Corner Store Resource Guide with information on food safety, handling and storage.
• HCS display items (i.e. baskets, signs).
• In-store promotion events such as samples of healthy items.
• Assistance in identifying producers and distributors to obtain low-cost fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy and other healthy items.
• Access to business development resources.
• Publicity and promotion within the neighborhood as a participating Healthy Corner Store.
• Community support from your Neighborhood Leadership Team. By actively working with this group, you will increase your presence in the community among existing and potential new customers.

• Mark prices on healthy foods and beverages.
• Display nutrition education materials provided by the project.
• Keep food fresh and food displays clean.