

Sonoma County Healthy Food Outlet Project

The Healthy Food Outlet Project was created to help food outlets (grocery stores, supermarkets, and small markets) provide customers with healthy food options while at the same time helping stores to increase customer loyalty and store profits.

The project seeks to establish a standard store quality threshold based on the availability and quality of fresh produce, healthy food, and advertising in stores. Once a participating food outlet has been assessed, the store receive a *Food Center Quality Scorecard* identifying areas that meet *Quality Score Standards* and areas that need improvement. Food outlet staff then make healthy changes needed to improve the score using the project's toolkit. After changes are made, a follow-up assessment is conducted to determine if the food outlet meets minimum requirements needed to be recognized as a Healthy Food Outlet. Stores that meet minimum *Quality Score Standards* receive promotional materials and publicity to educate consumers about the Healthy Food Outlet recognition program. Annual assessments are conducted to verify compliance with program guidelines.

The Healthy Food Outlet Project was adopted in 2009 by the Community Activity and Nutrition Coalition of Sonoma County (CAN-C)¹ and is endorsed by Health Action.² A pilot project is currently being implemented in southeast Santa Rosa and Roseland (in southwest Santa Rosa).

Commitment to Customer Health

A Healthy Food Outlet is a supermarket, grocery store or community market that has agreed to make changes in the store, and maintain a healthy environment, for the health of the community. These changes could include 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 non-fat milk and lowfat cheese
- Offering lean cuts of meat, tofu, and/or fish
- Keeping alternatives to soda in stock, such as unsweetened tea, milk, water, and 100% juice
- Offering healthy snacks, like baked chips, nuts, and unsweetened dried fruits
- Placing healthy foods in the checkout area
- Limiting unhealthy items, such as candy and soda, in the checkout area
- Working with distributors to provide and prominently display products that are good tasting and healthier for customers
- Limiting advertising for unhealthy foods and products, both inside and outside the store
- Posting ads or materials which promote healthy foods, both inside and outside the store
- Offering special events, such as tastings and/or promotions, so customers can try new, healthier foods
- Accepting vouchers for Food Stamps Program and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) supplemental food program, if possible, and posting the signs provided by those programs

¹ The **Community Activity and Nutrition Coalition of Sonoma County (CAN-C)** is a group of individuals, professionals and community based organizations concerned about the nutritional health, activity level and well-being of the residents of our community. 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.