

The Minneapolis Staple Foods Ordinance: An innovative policy to improve healthy food availability in small food stores

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CREATING A HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEM IN MINNEAPOLIS

- Growing interest in community gardens, farmers markets, urban agriculture, and healthy food.
- Increased collaboration between local government, schools, non-profits, neighborhoods, and hospitals.



EVERYBODY NEEDS
HEALTHY FOOD



INEQUITABLE ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS

- Minneapolis Health Department efforts focused in areas with limited access to healthy food and poor health outcomes.
- Improving healthy food availability in:
 - Retail outlets
 - Food shelves
 - Restaurants
 - Schools
 - Worksites
 - Parks



MINNEAPOLIS HEALTHY CORNER STORE PROGRAM



- Provided intensive technical assistance to 35+ stores
- Participating stores saw increased inventory and sales
- Difficult for stores to make and maintain significant changes
- Needed policy approach to achieve widespread, sustainable improvements

THE STAPLE FOODS ORDINANCE

- Originally adopted in 2008
- Set very minimal food standards
- Limited effectiveness due to:
 - Vague and confusing ordinance language
 - Minimal education and training for stores
 - Lack of capacity to rigorously enforce
 - Too many exemptions and loopholes



MULTI-SECTORAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Policy change required collaboration with:
 - Elected officials
 - City regulatory staff
 - Small business owners and business associations
 - Residents and community groups
 - Academic researchers
- Revised policy needed to be:
 - Easy to monitor and enforce
 - Realistic for a variety of stores
 - Sufficient enough for customers



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Internal meetings with regulatory staff, City Council champion, and nutrition researchers to develop draft language
- Industry meetings with small business owners and business associations to gather input
- Outreach to community members and organizations to generate support
- Educational meetings with City Council members to provide details
- Public hearing to solicit feedback



FINAL POLICY LANGUAGE

- Comprehensive food requirements (based on WIC)
- Applied to most food retailers (fewer exemptions)
- Strongly supported by stakeholders, including many small food retailers
- Unanimously adopted by City Council
- Ordinance details can be found at:
www.minneapolismn.gov/staplefoods



IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT

January - March 2015	Communications with store owners
April 2015 – March 2016	Education, training, and compliance checks <u>without</u> enforcement
April 2016 – ongoing	Education, training, and compliance checks <u>with</u> standard enforcement



ONGOING STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

- Convening *Community Advisory Committee* to guide implementation and evaluation efforts
- Continuing dialogue with store owners and business associations
- Providing regular trainings to Business Licensing staff and Health inspectors
- Conducting multi-year impact evaluation with University of Minnesota researchers
- Presenting progress reports to City Council



WORKING WITH: SMALL FOOD RETAILERS

- Successes:
 - Proactive engagement of small businesses
 - Deep understanding of small store culture
 - Early identification of compliance challenges and technical assistance needs
- Challenges:
 - Overcoming stores' fundamental resistance to more government regulation
- Lessons learned:
 - Highlight evidence of consumer demand
 - Focus on the support and resources available
 - Offer a “no enforcement” transition period



WORKING WITH: REGULATORY STAFF

- Successes:
 - (Initial) willing participation by regulatory staff
 - Productive transfer of knowledge and ideas
- Challenges:
 - Achieving consensus on policy language due to differing priorities
- Lessons learned:
 - Identify and focus on common goals
 - Offer solutions without compromising on proposed standards



WORKING WITH: ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS

- Successes:
 - Capacity to collect baseline data on healthy food availability in at-risk stores
 - Accurate understanding of potential impact of ordinance changes
- Challenges:
 - Balancing rigorous research with flexible implementation
- Lessons learned:
 - Build relationships early to allow for baseline data collection and real-time evaluation
 - Highlight evaluation resources in negotiations with stakeholders

