MARKET MAKEOVERS ARE A LOT OF WORK!
HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU’RE READY?

Having a vision is the first step to creating change.
But you have to get real to make your vision a long-term reality. So . . .

1. DOES YOUR COMMUNITY HAVE A PROBLEM WITH HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS?

Back it up with facts. What do statistics and data in your area point to? Is there a lack of healthy food options in your community? Are there more fast food places and liquor stores in your neighborhood than food markets? Are rates of obesity and diabetes higher in your area than in neighboring areas? Data like this can be found at your county’s Department of Public Health office, local community organizations that focus on these issues, or larger universities researching these issues.

You can use this evidence to build a case for action and to mobilize broad-based community support for your market makeover efforts.

2. DOES YOUR COMMUNITY WANT HEALTHIER FOOD?

In order for a market makeover to be successful, your community must want a change. They have to understand the benefits of healthier food options and more importantly, they have to want them enough to pay for them – routinely. They literally have to buy in.

If they don’t currently buy in, use the evidence from Question 1 to make your case.

3. DO YOU HAVE A COMMITTED, QUALIFIED TEAM?

A market makeover is a collaborative effort that requires a variety of skills and support from the community.

It is important to include people that have skills in:

- running a business
- marketing + promotion
- working with storeowners + vendors
- reorganizing + remodeling stores
- finances
- grant writing
- community organizing + mobilization
- working with youth + community members
- media
- nutrition
- public health
- policy + advocacy
- evaluation

While these people may not be full-time staff on your project, you should be connected to all of them.
4. HAVE YOU SECURED A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT FROM COMMUNITY + COALITION MEMBERS?

*Market makeovers take time and considerable investment.* Community + coalition members must think long-term when planning and implementing efforts to increase healthy food through a market makeover. They can:

- assist with the physical transformation of the market
- regularly promote the market after the makeover
- and whenever possible, buy from the converted market

The commitment to follow through on this investment must be made BEFORE YOU APPROACH A STOREOWNER.

5. HAVE YOU SECURED A BUDGET?

*Your budget will determine what kind of store you can work with and the number of staff you can employ.* Typically a corner store project will cost anywhere from $20,000 - $50,000 depending on the changes that need to be made to the store. If your budget is within this range you can complete a fairly extensive market makeover of a modest-sized store. If not, choose a store that already has costly equipment such as a refrigeration unit.

6. HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED BROAD-BASED, NON-MONETARY COMMUNITY RESOURCES?

*Money isn't everything.* Consult your map of community resources to help fill in gaps. Remember that you can also engage youth + community members to volunteer—just don’t forget to feed them + thank them for all their hard work!

7. DOES YOUR COALITION UNDERSTAND THAT THE STOREOWNER IS TAKING A FINANCIAL RISK?

*The community MUST understand the storeowner’s perspective.* It is essential that this point be made clearly and often: the storeowner is a partner. That partner runs a business. Once the storeowner has signed on and, as changes take place, the storeowner will need as much support as possible. The best support comes from his/her neighborhood and customers who can:

- come in once or twice a week to purchase healthy items
- express positive feedback about the healthier inventory
- help with the upkeep of the store

Support from the community is vital to helping the storeowner weather any storms that come as a result of making these changes.
8. DOES YOUR COALITION TRULY UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING + MARKETING THE STORE?

Planning for the marketing + promotion of the makeover should begin early, even before the makeover has begun. A market makeover helps your neighborhood get a new face, but getting others to see, know and patronize its “face” requires extra thought and work. Marketing + promoting the store (and its new, healthy inventory) is essential to its long-term sustainability.

After your market has had its makeover, it is essential to support these changes by maintaining a community presence and ongoing communication with the storeowner. For example, Good Faith Agreements with community partners can help generate business for the market by encouraging community partners (e.g. schools, community clinics, community centers, and local businesses) to purchase food from the market for their meetings and events.

In order to keep the changes after the big, dramatic reveal, customers have to keep coming back (ideally to buy healthy items from the store) – on a regular basis. You have to consistently prove to the storeowner that s/he made a sound business decision in undertaking the market makeover, and that these healthy changes are financially viable.

So, how do you **build a committed coalition?**