

HIGHLIGHTS & IMPACTS

65

Full- and part-time jobs

\$1 million

Total funds provided by the New Orleans Fresh Food Retailer Initiative (FFRI)

\$500,000

Forgivable loan component from FFRI

\$9 million

Total project costs

28,600

Residents in the surrounding area to be served by the store, according to HUD

22,000 sq. ft.

Of food retail that has returned to the Seventh Ward of New Orleans

Profile: Circle Food Store New Orleans, Louisiana



On January 17, 2014, key local stakeholders, including New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu and members of the city council, gathered at the Circle Food Store to celebrate its reopening. The store is a part of the city's commitment to revitalization projects connected to New Orleans's financial district and French Quarter. Several leaders in government and the financial sector discussed how Circle Food is integral to improving the business and economic infrastructure of the Seventh Ward, which is a predominately African American, low- to moderate-income community.

Funding for the grocery store was made possible through a variety of public and private sources, including the [New Orleans Fresh Food Retailer Initiative](#) (FFRI), an innovative financing program that promotes healthy food retail development in neighborhoods where residents struggle to access healthy food. FFRI is administered by the City of New Orleans, Hope Enterprise Corporation, a regional community development financial institution, and The Food Trust, a national food access organization. FFRI was created following a 2007 task force process led by Tulane University's Prevention Research Center and The Food Trust that convened local public officials and health advocates dedicated to improving food access in New Orleans.

When Circle Food Store initially opened its doors in 1938, it was the first African American-owned grocery store in the city. The store became an important part of the fabric of the Tremé neighborhood,

employing local teenagers and engaging residents in community affairs for several decades. Circle Food Store thrived in the community from 1938 to 2005, during a time in our nation's history when many grocery stores and other healthy food retailers were divesting from low-income and urban neighborhoods across the country.

Unfortunately, storm damage and flooding caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 forced the Circle Food Store to close its doors after the store was covered by over five feet of water. The closure of the establishment had collateral consequences for residents of the Seventh Ward and Tremé, including the loss of local jobs, a place to purchase healthy food, and a meeting space for community members. In the years after Katrina, many of the residents displaced by the storm have since returned to the neighborhood to rebuild the community, but are struggling to access healthy and affordable food.

“Circle Food served the community for many years, and I look forward to bringing this institution back to serve the community once again... The city's support of Circle through the Fresh Food Retailer Initiative and Economic Development Fund will help me do just that.”

Dwayne Boudreaux, Owner of Circle Food since 1991

With funding from FFRI along with an Economic Development Fund grant from the city and a loan from the Louisiana Office of Community Development, Circle Food Store owner Dwayne Boudreaux was able to finance the reopening and renovation of Circle Foods and add to the continued redevelopment of the Seventh Ward community following Hurricane Katrina. According to HUD, 28,000 low- to moderate-income residents live within a one-mile radius of the store and will now have improved access to healthy food. The store created 65 full- and part-time jobs for the community and 95 percent of these positions are filled by local residents.

“The fresh foods this neighborhood merchant provides will be one more part of what we're doing to build healthy communities, create jobs, and stimulate economic development across New Orleans.”

Bill Bynum, CEO of HOPE Enterprise Corporation

In addition to being a grocery store, Circle Food Store has a pharmacy and credit union to serve residents of the neighborhood. The [FFRI program](#) continues to award financing to grocery projects in New Orleans to improve the health and well-being of residents and communities. Click [here](#) to view a documentary clip that shows how Circle Food Store is part of a movement to change food access in neighborhoods like this one across the country.



For more information about the Healthy Food Access Portal, contact us at info@healthyfoodaccess.org.