

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS & IMPACTS

**18,163**

Near Westside residents, of whom nearly 70% are low/moderate-income, have improved and expanded access to healthy food

**65**

Total jobs created/retained

**\$2.89 million**

Total project costs

**\$2.23 million**

Construction loan from HFHC Fund

**\$400,000**

Project grant from the NY HFHC Fund

**\$232,000**

Credit enhancement from the federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative

**24,216**

Square feet of full-service supermarket retail space

## Profile: Nojaim Brothers Supermarket and the New York Healthy Food and Healthy Communities (HFHC) Fund



Photo Courtesy of *Syracuse News Times*, 2014

Nojaim Brothers Supermarket is a neighborhood institution that has served the Near Westside community of Syracuse, New York, for more than 90 years. The supermarket — the oldest in the neighborhood, Syracuse's only independently owned grocery store, and a community hub — faced possible closure in 2010 due to dated infrastructure and decades of population and economic decline. For many, Nojaim Brothers is the only convenient retail option for fresh, healthy foods, and the closing would have left community residents, more than 40 percent of whom live in poverty, with few alternatives. Paul Nojaim, a third generation grocer and the store's owner, knew that in order to remain viable and continue to serve the neighborhood, one of the poorest in the state, he needed to make a bold investment in the supermarket and Near Westside.

The expansion, renovation, and revival of Nojaim Brothers Supermarket was made possible by the New York [Healthy Food & Healthy Communities \(HFHC\) Fund](#), a public-private financing program supporting healthy food markets throughout the state. Administered by the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF), a community development financial institution, and The Food Trust, a national food access organization, the \$30 million fund offers financing for capital projects and related predevelopment activities aimed at strengthening and developing food markets in low- and moderate-income underserved communities. The NY HFHC Fund was capitalized by a

grant from New York State through the Empire State Development Corporation and a loan from Goldman Sachs Bank.

In 2013, Jim Ried of Olean Wholesalers referred Paul Nojaim to the NY HFHC Fund. Ried, an instrumental advocate for the statewide fund, believed the quality of the supermarket and its commitment to the community made Nojaim and Nojaim Brothers Supermarket an ideal applicant. As part of The Food Trust's objective to identify projects fulfilling the program's mission, the organization met with Nojaim, toured his store, and witnessed firsthand the importance of the store to the community. Through the fund, and with additional financing from the federal [Healthy Food Financing Initiative](#) (HFFI), which provided a \$232,000 credit enhancement, LIIF provided a \$2.23 million construction loan and a \$400,000 grant to Nojaim Supermarket to support a complete renovation of the 50-year-old building, including new equipment and a 3,000-square-foot expansion. The project created 17 construction jobs, preserved 68 permanent jobs in the local community, and restored a trusted and respected small business.

*"Nojaim Brothers Supermarket is so much more than a grocery store. It is a community hub, an innovator in addressing public health and a symbol of the future of a revitalized Syracuse . . . To achieve its mission of supporting healthy families and communities, LIIF seeks to invest in integrated, locally driven projects like Nojaim Brothers Supermarket that improve neighborhoods and the quality of life for all residents."*

***Nancy O. Andrews, President and CEO of LIIF***

In addition to renovating his store, Paul Nojaim is working to help revitalize the Near Westside neighborhood. Through his leadership, the store is collaborating with St. Joseph's Hospital, Syracuse University, and the Onondaga County Department of Health on several initiatives to connect primary care services with nutrition and healthy eating. For example, the supermarket will be introducing a new in-store incentive and loyalty program that will award points to shoppers for healthy purchases, and those points can be redeemed on future purchases and even health services. Nojaim Brothers has also launched a local youth workforce-training program that is providing young people the opportunity to hone communication and job skills.

*"Without LIIF or the New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund and the national Healthy Food Financing Initiative, this doesn't happen. When we've had issues, the neighborhood's always rallied around us. There's a unique relationship where [the community] view[s] this as an asset... it only succeeds if [the] people that live here trust that [we] are doing right by them."*

***Paul Nojaim, owner of Nojaim Brothers Supermarket***

After 12 months of remodeling and adding equipment upgrades, Nojaim Brothers Supermarket reopened its doors to eager customers in October of 2014. The revitalized supermarket, with its goals of providing a modern, full-service shopping experience, promoting healthy eating and wellness, and offering training and support to youth, will now continue to successfully serve Syracuse for generations to come.

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For more information about the Healthy Food Access Portal, contact us at [info@healthyfoodaccess.org](mailto:info@healthyfoodaccess.org).