

The Key Players Involved in Healthy Food Retail Strategies

The following is a guide of many of the key players involved in a healthy food retail project or program. Most healthy food retail projects will involve several of these key players.

Retail Operator: A retail operator is charged with operating and keeping a retail store functioning. An experienced retail operator is key to a store's success as the operator will oversee all of the store's operations, from day-to-day management to product placement. Retail operators' scope ranges from small stores with only a handful of workers to large grocery stores with hundreds of employees.

Real Estate Developer: A developer buys land and then builds structures to sell or lease for commercial businesses, offices, and homes. Often healthy food retail is introduced into an underserved community as part of a larger new development. Supermarkets may serve as anchors and attract other tenants to a new site.

Federal, State, and Local Governments: To attract and expand healthy food access in underserved communities, some governments offer streamlined permitting, flexible zoning policies or grants, loans, and incentives to help facilitate and speed-up retail development. To learn more, go to "[Find Money](#)."

Lenders: While some grants are available, the majority of money for healthy food retail comes in the form of loans from banks, community development financial institutions (CDFIs), and other lenders. For more information on potential lenders in your area, go to "[Find Money](#)."

Community Advocates: Leaders at the local level have worked hard to attract new stores or create thriving farmers' markets and co-ops in their communities. They have also persuaded government at all levels to get involved and help to incentivize healthy food retail to locate in their communities. Community advocates often rely on their local knowledge of their communities along with detailed mapping tools such as the [Limited Supermarket Access Data Tool](#) and [PolicyMap](#).

Foundations: Several philanthropic foundations are starting to provide grants or loans to help improve healthy food access. These foundations understand that for a relatively small investment, they can help a healthy food retail business to open or expand, and in doing so, provide jobs, attract additional businesses, and improve the health of the community. For examples, go [here](#).

Researchers: Ongoing research helps us to define how increased access improves residents' health and strengthens the economy of underserved communities. For key studies, go to "[Making the Case](#)."



Public Health Professionals: Public health professionals seek to transform the diets of residents to lower the incidence of obesity and other chronic diseases including diabetes and heart disease.

Economic Development Professionals: Economic development professionals work to persuade new businesses to locate in a community, region, or state; try to help the businesses that are already in the community to continue growing there; and look for ways to turn distressed areas into vibrant hubs of economic activity. They are frequently responsible for programs, policies, funding, and other incentives designed to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community by creating and/or retaining jobs that facilitate growth and provide a stable tax base. Economic development professionals represent a broad range of experiences and often work for regional, state, county, and city economic development organizations and redevelopment agencies; chambers of commerce and other business-support agencies; planning commissions and community and neighborhood development organizations; and for-profit firms.

Food Access Organization: A food access organization (FAO) is a nonprofit focused on access to healthy food. An FAO advocates for community need and brings a public health perspective to the table in the administration of a fresh food financing initiative.

