

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS & IMPACTS

224

square feet of mobile-market retail space.

12

different truck stops to provide healthy food options in unique and underserved neighborhoods twice a week in north and west Tulsa.

600

different products are available for purchase including fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, milk/dairy products, and eggs.

\$80,000

in grant funding for the opening of the mobile market.

100%

volunteer operated.

6

months since R&G Family Grocers began providing quality produce to Tulsa residents.

Profile: R&G Family Grocers' Mobile Market

Tulsa, Oklahoma



In 2010, the Healthy Community Store Initiative (HCSI) was created as a nonprofit corporation dedicated to enhancing the health of Oklahomans. The organization focuses on bringing healthy food to Tulsa residents, specifically those located in the city's underserved regions, where people lack adequate access to fresh, healthy foods. The only nearby food retailers are convenience stores which do not sell the healthiest of fare and not at the most economical of prices.

Typical of many Tulsa neighborhoods are convenience stores lacking healthy food options. In addition to the dearth of fresh food options, many Tulsa residents lack sufficient transportation to full-service supermarkets. In some areas, residents may spend as long as four or more hours on a bus trip to the grocery store. These underserved regions in Tulsa overlap with high-poverty communities with inadequate health-care access. The combination creates communities that are at high risk for diet-related health problems.

With these challenges in mind, HCSI began [R&G Family Grocers](#) which does business as the Real Good Food truck, a full-service, mobile grocery store that brings healthy, affordable food to 12 unique and underserved areas of Tulsa. The Real Good Food Truck is stocked with 600 products, including fruits and vegetables, meat, milk/dairy products, eggs, and a variety of dry goods.

R&G Family Grocers began with the help of a \$50,000 grant from the Helmerich Foundation and \$20,000 from the Kaiser Family Foundation. The organization used the funds to outfit a 224-square-foot, ADA-accessible trailer and truck. The grants also enabled the purchase of the initial

inventory. The store functions solely off the volunteer work of Katie Plohocky and Scott Smith, president and vice president of HCSI, respectively, along with a handful of other volunteers.

Although it lacks storage facilities to buy large quantities of goods and store fresh produce, R&G Family Grocers still provides affordable, fresh, quality products. Volunteers travel to local farms nearly every day to purchase produce directly from farmers. In the near future, the mobile-market operators hope to ease the burden of these time-consuming trips. Thanks to a recent grant from the Zarrow Family Foundation, R&G



Family Grocers will purchase a cargo container which will allow them to store larger quantities of produce and dry goods for longer periods of time.

The mobile market is also an eligible location for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and recently began participating in the Double-Up Food Bucks program. This program provides vouchers — up to \$20 in value — to customers who purchase Oklahoma-grown fruits and vegetables using their SNAP benefits. Double-up Food Bucks makes the purchase of fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP customers while supporting local farmers.

In addition to improving healthy food access, HCSI provides instructions on health and wellness. HCSI volunteers talk with customers about their dietary restrictions and cultural food preferences. The “Real.Good.Food” circular includes healthy recipes and information on nutrition, health statistics, and healthy lifestyles.

The positive response from the community has exceeded HCSI’s expectations for the mobile market. The Real Good Food truck has demonstrated that there is more than a need for fresh food in Tulsa — there’s a demand.

“The misconception is that people in low-income areas or who are having a hard time in life don’t want to eat fruits and vegetables. We’re selling out almost every day and not having any spoilage. They just don’t have the access.”

Katie Plohocky, President, HSCI

Despite all of their success, R&G Family Grocers envisions the Real Good Food Truck paving the way for a brick-and-mortar store. R&G hopes to use the data and community input that it has collected to convince food retailers that Tulsa’s low-income neighborhoods have the commercial potential for a conventional grocery store. R&G Family Grocers, while providing an immediate solution to inequitable access to healthy food, ultimately plans to provide a long-term solution to the lack of food accessibility and continue the growth of healthy, affordable food options in the community.



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

