

Improving Access to Affordable Healthy Food

A Resource Guide for
Implementing Policy Changes in Marin County



MARIN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

HOW CHANGE HAPPENS

As part of the Foundation's goal of promoting health equity in our community by improving the health of underserved residents, we are supporting a range of efforts to increase access to affordable, healthy food.

These include programs that increase the availability of healthy food in schools and local markets and help ensure that activities like farmers markets and community gardens exist in lower-income communities in the county.

Many studies show that easier access to healthy food leads to greater consumption of them and, as a result, better health.

While individual programs are crucial to meeting immediate needs, we also must work at the policy level in order to effect change that is sustainable and impacts the broader system of food distribution.

This resource guide is designed to assist community leaders in developing and implementing these kinds of policy changes. It describes a variety of policies that address access to healthy food and provides examples of local efforts. It also cites resources from around the country that serve as a guide to help implement these local policies.

The Foundation is pleased to offer this guide, whose ultimate goal is help everyone lead healthier lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Peters', with a stylized, cursive script.

Thomas Peters, Ph.D.
President and CEO,
Marin Community Foundation

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I. Introduction

It is anticipated that one-third of all children today will eventually suffer from diabetes as a result of being obese¹. Low-income, underserved communities of color suffer disproportionately higher rates of overweight, obesity, and other related chronic health conditions and diseases. A number of studies across the country have identified connections of these health inequalities to economic, political, and social factors affecting our living environments; these are often referred to as social determinants of health (SDH).² Access to affordable healthy food is a critical SDH factor producing health inequalities around obesity, diabetes, and other chronic conditions and diseases.^{2,3}

Residents of low-income communities lack access to affordable healthy food primarily due to the unavailability of supermarkets that offer the greatest variety of healthy food at affordable prices. This disparity is often seen in predominantly African American and Hispanic communities more so than in white neighborhoods.^{4,5} The lack of reliable transportation systems in low-income communities further limits access to healthy eating. Low-income communities, including rural and urban areas, typically lack the transportation infrastructure to make or facilitate trips to outside food sources and stores in more affluent areas with healthier and more affordable offerings. With limited transportation, low-income residents often rely on smaller neighborhood convenience or liquor stores, which primarily carry alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, and food that is processed and high in fat and sugar. Often times these convenience or liquor stores operating as “markets” monopolize the food offerings available to immobile residents in low-income communities and usually charge prices that are much higher than those in outside supermarkets.^{6,7,8} The end result is a system where the poorest people pay the highest prices for the least nutritious food.^{7,8}

The Marin Community Foundation commissioned this resource guide to serve as a tool for community leaders who are interested in addressing the obesity epidemic by improving access to affordable, healthy food among low-income communities in Marin. This resource guide, while not exhaustive, highlights an array of promising policy options and programs that aim to systemically improve access to healthy food in low-income communities. The Foundation looks forward to continuing partnerships with community groups that are committed to addressing poor health outcomes for low-income residents, especially residents living in Marin City, West Marin, the Canal neighborhood in San Rafael, the Hamilton area, and other dispersed areas of Novato, as these areas of the County have the highest overweight and obesity rates and self-report the highest rates of poor health.⁹

II. Overview of Local Policy Options

Policy options to improve access to healthy food in Marin County, particularly in low-income neighborhoods, are presented below. The policy options are based on a comprehensive literature review of advocacy and implementation strategies at the local and national levels and through interviews with local key informants and experts. The purpose of this policy scan is to inform local community leaders about opportunities to generate systemic change by creating greater access to healthy eating in public schools and low-income neighborhoods in Marin County. The policy options are presented by school sector and neighborhood sector.

School Sector

School policies to promote access to healthy and affordable foods include:

1. Implement and monitor the adopted Marin school wellness policies aimed at increasing access to affordable healthy food
2. Restrict fast food outlets/mobile vendors within a 1/2 mile of school grounds
3. Amend food vendor contracts in order to meet mandated guidelines securing affordable healthy and nutritious foods in school lunch programs
4. Ensure that school vending machines include affordable healthy food options
5. Institutionalize school gardens
6. Restrict marketing and availability of unhealthy food and beverage on school campuses
7. Institutionalize farm-to-school programs

Neighborhood Sector

Neighborhood policies to promote access to healthy and affordable foods include:

1. Strengthen, implement, and monitor the adopted public health sections in county and city general plans to promote access to affordable healthy foods in low-income neighborhoods
2. Restrict concentration of fast food outlets within low-income neighborhoods
3. Require local/convenience stores located in low-income neighborhoods to offer or increase offerings of affordable healthy foods
4. Require and/or incentivize all food sources to accept public assistance programs (e.g., EBT/Food Stamps)
5. Create infrastructure for urban agriculture efforts (e.g., community gardens) in low-income neighborhoods
6. Increase availability of affordable healthy food throughout the year in low-income neighborhoods

A description of each policy option and the potential opportunities that exist in Marin County is presented below. Based on an extensive literature review and the key informant interviews, the “Successful Strategies, Initiatives, and Toolkits” section includes references to available research, resources, and best practices that support the proposed policy option. These references rose to the top as possible applications in Marin County. The online version of this report includes live links to the resources provided under this section. The “Local Program Spotlights” include Marin County-based examples of work that aligns with the policy option. The highlighted programs provide a foundation for future institutionalized change.

III. School Sector Policy Options

Access to affordable healthy food

Policy Option 1: Implement and monitor the adopted Marin school wellness policies to increase access to affordable, nutritious, and healthy food

Background

As of 2006, public school districts nationwide were required by federal law to adopt and implement a “wellness policy” that promotes student health through nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities. Wellness policies were also required to include nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus within the district.¹⁰ According to a 2009 national evaluation of local school wellness policies, at the beginning of the 2007-08 school year, most students nationwide were enrolled in a school district with an adopted wellness policy. However, schools were not required to enforce these policies, and many lacked sufficient plans for implementation and monitoring. Only 5-6% of students were enrolled in a district that identified a potential source of funding to support implementation of its wellness policy. Furthermore, the vast majority of students were enrolled in a district that did not require evaluation of the implementation or effectiveness of its wellness policy nor contained any provisions for revising it.^{11,12}

The Marin County Department of Health and Human Services’ Wellness Collaborative worked in partnership with the Marin County Office of Education, 18 school district boards, and principals to develop and adopt school wellness policies in each of the school districts. The school wellness policies were developed based on the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA) Model Policy Framework for local school districts.

Opportunities in Marin County

- Strengthen partnerships with the Marin County Office of Education, school districts, Marin Wellness Collaborative, and community-based organizations to institutionalize (implement and monitor) the adopted school wellness policies developed by the School Nutrition Advisory Councils and School Wellness Councils, particularly in schools serving low-income students.
- Engage community residents, especially those living in low-income communities, in the school wellness policy implementation and monitoring process.

Successful Strategies, Initiatives, and Toolkits

- Toolkit used to develop the Marin County school districts wellness policies: www.marinschools.org/Wellness/table_of_contents.htm
- National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA)-Model Local School Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition: www.banpac.org/pdfs/healthy_vending/nana_model_policy.pdf
- National Policy and Legal Analysis Networks — How to Implement a Wellness Policy Toolkit: nplanonline.org/files/ImplementWellnsPly_FactSheet_web_FINAL_090219.pdf
- Robert Wood Johnson-Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity- Toolkits on school Wellness policies:
 - www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/content/school-nutrition
 - www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/webfm_send/35
- Leadership for Healthy Communities — Action strategies toolkit list to reduce childhood obesity through public policies:

www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org/images/stories/toolkit/lhc_action_strategies_toolkit_0900504final.pdf

- Healthy Eating Active Communities (HEAC) — Link to toolkits and resources to develop, implement, and monitor school wellness policies:
www.healthyeatingactivecommunities.org/resources1_2.php
 - Sonoma Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) — Link to school wellness policies, planning and implementation tools:
www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm
-

Policy Option 2: Adopt, implement, and monitor school district and zoning policies that restrict fast food outlets/mobile vendors within a 1/2 mile of school grounds

Background

A 2009 study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* found that students with fast-food outlets located within a 1/2-1 mile of their schools (1) consumed fewer servings of fruits and vegetables, (2) consumed more servings of soda, and (3) were more likely to be overweight than youth whose schools were not near fast-food restaurants. Fast-food consumption by 2- to 18-year-olds increased 5-fold from 1977 to 1995; by the latter year, fast food was consumed at 9% of eating occasions and comprised 12% of daily caloric intake. Almost one third of all youth now eat at fast-food outlets on any given day. Exposure to poor-quality food environments has important effects on youth eating patterns. Policy interventions limiting the proximity of fast-food outlets to schools could help reduce youth overweight and obesity rates.¹³

Residents of low-income communities have the highest overweight and obesity rates in Marin County and self-report the highest rates of poor health. High school students generally eat lunch from locations located within a 1-mile radius from school. Many fast-foods outlets in Marin County are located within a 1-mile radius from schools serving low-income communities.¹⁴ Social stigma associated with school cafeterias deter students from eating at the school cafeteria. Students would rather purchase food from snack bars (usually offering unhealthy foods) or from off campus fast-food outlets. Additional data is needed to determine the number, location, and student utilization of fast-food outlets during the school day.

Opportunities in Marin County

- Limit the number of fast-food outlets and mobile vendors allowed to operate in Marin County (zoning, community planning) in particular within ½ -1 mile radius from the school grounds.
- Impose fees to fast food outlets and mobile vendors located within a 1-mile radius of school grounds in Marin County in order to contribute toward a school district fund directed at providing healthy food options at schools.
- Design, institute, and enforce an ordinance to keep mobile vendors at a set distance away from schools.

“It is critical that public agencies partner with nonprofits to build trust, facilitate access to community and city data, and promote community involvement at the policy level in order to improve sustainable efforts.”

- Anthony Taylor, Health Information Specialist, Sonoma Health Services Department

- Partner with community based organizations, Healthy Marin Partnership, and the Marin Wellness Collaborative to offer incentives to local fast-food outlets located within a mile from school grounds to add healthier food options on their fast-food menu.
- Partner with Marin Department of Health and Human Services, Epidemiology Program to map unhealthy and healthy food options around schools grounds overlaid with socioeconomic status data and health outcomes (e.g. obesity and other chronic diseases).

Successful Strategies, Initiatives, and Toolkits:

- Robert Wood Johnson, Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity — Resources on school zoning policies: www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/content/school-nutrition
- Sonoma Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) — Increased healthy food options at local corner stores located within a ½ mile from school grounds. School Sector Summary: www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm
School Action Plan: www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm

Policy Option 3: Adopt, implement, and monitor school district policies to amend food vendor contracts in order to meet mandated guidelines securing affordable healthy and nutritious foods in school lunch programs

Background

As of 2006, public school districts nationwide were required by federal law to adopt and implement a “wellness policy” that promotes student health through nutrition education, physical activity, and other school based activities. Wellness policies must also include nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus within the district.¹⁵ With a federal cap limit on reimbursement and compensation amounts for school lunch programs, schools are limited in the types of foods they serve. As schools want to avoid leftover food at the end of the day, there is resistance to purchase and serve healthy foods that may be more expensive and not as popular among students, therefore opting for more affordable, less nutritious foods. Additionally, food supply chain vendors establish long-term contracts with schools. Therefore, schools must wait until their vending contracts expire before they can have an opportunity to change the terms to require healthier options.¹⁶

Locally, this situation is no different in Marin County. Local audits conducted by the Marin County Office of Education found that nutritional standards were not met. In addition, increased costs and labor associated with the distribution, refrigeration, and preparation of fresh local foods are higher than those involved with the use of food management companies, which offer primarily cheaper, processed food alternatives.¹⁷

Opportunities in Marin County

- Educate and train school staff, including Food Service Directors, how to negotiate/amend multi-year contracts with food corporations to require healthy food options in schools.
- Implement salad bar programs in Marin County schools, especially those serving low-income students.
- Establish an organic farming program in Marin County public schools to involve students in the vendor selections, tasting, and design of the school lunch menu.

- Connect local food sources with school food programs.
- Engage parents, students, and teachers in partnerships with Food Service Directors to inform menus that are healthy and attractive to patrons.
- Collaborate with local gleaning programs to complement lunch school programs.

Successful Strategies, Initiatives and Toolkits

- Robert Wood Johnson, Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity — Resources on school wellness policies:
www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/content/school-nutrition
- Harvest of the Month-Network for a Healthy California — Strategies designed to motivate and empower students to increase consumption and enjoyment of fruits and vegetables:
www.harvestofthemonth.com/download/How-To-Guide.pdf
- Public Health Law & Policy — School nutrition advocacy. Fact sheets and resources to improve or eliminate contracts with food and beverage companies:
www.schoolhealthlaw.org/publications.html
- Community Activity & Nutrition Coalition (CAN-C) — Project looks to increase the availability of healthy foods that people can afford. School Sector Summary:
www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm
School Action Plan: www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm
- From Farm to Cafeteria Conference—sponsored by the National Farm to School Network:
farmtocafeteriaconference.org/
- Petaluma Bounty, a community food gleaning program redistributing surplus food and providing affordable fresh food to low-income families and seniors: www.petalumabounty.org
- Respecting Our Elders, an all-volunteer nonprofit providing free surplus foods to seniors and other in Marin: respectingourelders.org

Policy Option 4: Adopt, implement, and monitor school district policies that require school vending machines to include affordable healthy food options

Background

A nationwide vending machines survey found that in middle schools and high schools, 75% of the drinks and 85% of the snacks sold are of poor nutritional value. Furthermore, foods sold at vending machines, school stores, and other venues outside of schools that participated in the official school lunch program did positively contribute to youth diets and health.¹⁸ While the Department of Agriculture sets standards for nutrient content and portion sizes for official school meals, it currently has little authority in regulating the foods that are sold outside those meals, whether in vending machines or a la carte (snack) lines in cafeterias. Schools face a variety of challenges in offering healthy food options in the vending machines including the fact that healthy foods are usually perishable items and have a shorter shelf life compared to processed food, and junk food companies provide on-going financial incentives to stock vending machines with their products.

Opportunities in Marin County

- Prohibit junk food and sodas in schools, especially where students from low-income communities attend.
- Partner with the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services Wellness Collaborative, the Marin County Office of Education, teachers and parents to promote sustainable efforts to offer healthy foods in school vending machines.
- Conduct an assessment of water consumption among public school students. If findings reveal students are not consuming appropriate amounts of water during the day, promote the addition and/or improvement of water fountains and providing personal water bottles to students.

Successful Strategies, Initiatives, and Toolkits

- Robert Wood Johnson, Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity — Resources on school wellness policies: www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/content/school-nutrition
- YLI Student Nutrition-Vending machine pilot project at the Pickleweed Community Center.¹⁹
- Bay Area Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative (BANPAC) — Healthy vending machine policy and toolkit: www.banpac.org/healthy_vending_machine_toolkit.htm
- Harvest of the Month-Network for a Healthy California — Strategies designed to motivate and empower students to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables: www.harvestofthemonth.com/download/How-To-Guide.pdf
- School water fountains project: well.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/30/school-water-fountains-to-prevent-obesity/

LOCAL PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Youth Leadership Institute – Pickleweed Community Center Vending Machine

In 2008, Youth Leadership Institute (a member of the Marin Wellness Collaborative) formed a Student Nutrition Advisory Council, which partnered with the San Rafael Parks Department to provide healthy vending machine foods at community centers. As a result of the pilot project at Pickleweed Community Center, healthy food options (e.g., apples, yogurt, and granola bars) were included in the vending machine. Although the machine still offered soda and junk food items, the healthy food items were kept at lower price points than the soda and junk food. Unfortunately, this positive change was not institutionalized, and after the pilot project ended, the healthy food options were no longer available in the vending machine.

Policy Option 5: Adopt, implement, and monitor school district policies that institutionalize school gardens

Background

Research indicates that schools with healthy nutrition environments that include school gardens improve student health. Research shows that children who plant and harvest their own fruits and vegetables are more likely to eat them. Overall, students who participate in school garden projects learn about fresh food, make healthier food choices, and are more physically active.^{20,21,22,23,24} Lack of sustainable funding, staff turnover, and waning community support often prevent schools from creating and maintaining gardens.

Opportunities in Marin County

- Deepen partnerships between community-based organizations, school districts, and the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services Wellness Collaborative to leverage resources and

sustain community gardens and/or farmers markets at schools, especially those serving children in low-income communities.

LOCAL PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Milagro Foundation and Growing Great Marin City, a low-income community with a majority of African American residents, has a critical need for accessibility to healthy food. “Marin City is a community that doesn’t have a grocery store,” Milagro Foundation Executive Director Shelley Brown said. The only local food options are five fast-food restaurants. With support from the Milagro Foundation, Growing Great—a new school garden at Martin Luther King, Jr. Academy Middle School, in the Sausalito/Marin City School District—brings nutrition education and access to healthy foods to Marin City’s children and their families.

Source: Mullins J, “A budding city”. Marinscope Newspaper, Jan 6, 2010. www.marinscope.com/articles/2010/01/10/sausalito_marin_scope/news/doc4b44fd9058d4c441568033.txt

- Institute programs that involve both students and parents in the preparation and serving of fruits and vegetables in schools (e.g., food tastings and educational workshops)
- Partner with the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services, Epidemiology Program, to map unhealthy and healthy food options around schools grounds overlaid with socioeconomic status data and health outcomes (e.g. obesity and other chronic diseases).

Successful Strategies, Initiatives, and Toolkits

- Robert Wood Johnson, Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity - Resources on farm-to school policies: www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/content/school-nutrition
- Harvest of the Month-Network for a Healthy California — Strategies designed to increase students consumption and enjoyment of fruits and vegetables: www.harvestofthemonth.com/download/How-To-Guide.pdf
- Urban and Environmental Policy Center for Food & Justice, Occidental College — “Fresh From the Farm Pilot Project” established a direct connection between the classroom and a Southern California organic farm. Description: departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfi/publications/fresh_from_the_hm Full report: www.farmtoschool.org/files/publications_91.pdf

Policy Option 6: Adopt, implement, and monitor school district policies that restrict marketing and availability of unhealthy food and beverages on school campuses

Background

Education laws requiring children to attend school make them, in effect, a “captive audience” with little or no ability to shield themselves from school-based marketing.²² Many students, particularly those in elementary grades, have not yet developed the literacy skills necessary to understand the intent of commercial messages. Food and beverage marketing influences the diets and health prospects of children and youth. Among California high schools, nearly 72 % allow advertising for fast food and beverages on campus, while only 13% prohibit such advertising. Studies have shown that labeling and signage on school campuses have an effect on students’ food selections at school.²⁵ A recent California study by the Public Health Institute found that: (1) 60% of the posters and signage for food and beverage products were for products such as candy, soda, and chips; (2) 93% of school events were supported by companies selling unhealthy foods such as candy, fast food, and soda; and (3) 71% of the logos displayed on equipment were for sweetened beverages and sports drinks.²⁶

Opportunities in Marin County

- Eliminate the marketing and advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages at all public schools
- Eliminate commercial influences that promote unhealthy foods and beverages in classroom curriculum materials and on campus.
- Set guidelines for business partnerships that restrict marketing and advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages on school campuses.
- Conduct an assessment of water consumption among public school students. If findings reveal students are not consuming appropriate amounts of water during the day, promote the addition and/or improvement of water fountains and providing personal water bottles to students.

LOCAL PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Novato Unified School District and Marin Organic

Under the leadership of Food and Nutrition services Director Miguel Villarreal, the Novato Unified School Districts' Farm-to-School program provides students access to organic, locally grown food. Through a partnership with local distributors (Marin Organic and Marin Produce), a delivery truck picks up free, gleaned produce from several dozen participating farms and delivers it to the district kitchen preparing meals for the schools. The school district gets first choice of the gleaned products.

Source: Farm to School website www.farmtoschool.org/state-programs.php?action=detail&id=4&pid=64

Successful Strategies, Initiatives and Toolkits:

- Robert Wood Johnson, Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity — Resources on school marketing policies: www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/content/school-nutrition
- California Project LEAN Toolkit: "Captive Kids: Selling Obesity at Schools. An Action Guide to Stop the Marketing of Unhealthy Foods and Beverages in School": www.californiaprojectlean.org/docuserfiles//Captive%20Kids2007.pdf
- School water fountains project: well.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/30/school-water-fountains-to-prevent-obesity/

Policy Option 7: Adopt, implement, and monitor school district policies to institutionalize farm-to-school programs in schools

Background

As of March 2010, more than 2,111 farm-to-school programs have been implemented in more than 40 states in the US.²⁷ Although this program has been in existence in the U.S. for nearly a decade, a growing number of states and school districts are becoming open to farm-to-school programs to increase the quality and availability of fresh, healthy foods for their students.

Challenges with instituting farm-to-school programs include: (1) new distribution opportunities must be explored constantly, as it may prove difficult to locate a distributor that will provide local produce, (2) many schools rely on frozen, pre-cooked food, and no longer possess kitchen equipment or expertise to prepare fresh foods, which may be viewed as inconvenient to prepare, and (3) schools on a budget often have a limited staff of food service professionals to prepare fresh food, which is a more time-consuming process. Despite these challenges, Novato Unified School District is able to include some locally grown, organic food in the 4,500 meals it produces every school day.

Opportunities in Marin County

- Implement an effective farm-to-school collaborative that includes local government (e.g., public agencies, city agencies) as well as local farms, community-based organizations, and educational organizations.
- Connect small farms with school meal programs to encourage small farmers to sell fruits and vegetables to schools, and encourage schools and districts to work with local farmers.
- Allocate a certain percentage of the school's budget toward purchasing and processing fresh vegetables and produce.
- Assess the return on investment when locally grown, organic food is offered in the school meals.
- Collaborate with fresh produce gleaning programs in Marin connected with local farmers to complement lunch school programs.

Successful Strategies, Initiatives, and Toolkits

- Robert Wood Johnson, Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity — Resources on school Marketing policies: www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/webfm_send/35
- Novato Unified School District – Farm-to-school program: www.farmtoschool.org/state-programs.php?action=detail&id=4&pid=64
- Farm-to-school programs-Approaches to connecting small farms to school meal programs to serve fruits and vegetables in schools: www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/webfm_send/35.
- Petaluma Bounty, a community food gleaning program redistributing surplus food and providing affordable fresh food to low-income families and seniors: www.petalumabouty.org
- Respecting Our Elders, an all-volunteer nonprofit providing free surplus foods to seniors and other in Marin: respectingourelders.org

IV. Neighborhood Sector Policy Options

Access to affordable healthy food

Policy Option 1: Strengthen, implement, and monitor the adopted public health sections in county and city general plans to improve access to affordable healthy foods in low-income neighborhoods

Background

Historically, health and human service agencies have not typically been included in the development and implementation of city or county general plans. There is significant evidence linking transportation, planning, and community design with access to healthy food.²⁸ In addition, the involvement of low-income residents in the planning process has been a challenge due to communication barriers and the lack of trust toward these public institutions.²⁹ Without input from a variety of community perspectives, public agency plans often fall short of addressing social determinants of health, especially related to securing access to local, affordable healthy food in low-income neighborhoods.

Opportunities in Marin County

- Review and implement amendments to county and city general plans (e.g., change land use/zoning policies, change permit issuing procedures) in order to increase access to affordable healthy foods in low-income neighborhoods. (e.g., improve infrastructure in low-income communities for safe walking and bicycling to increase access to healthy and affordable food without a car)
- Partner with the Healthy Marin Partnership, the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services Wellness Collaborative, and community based organizations to generate data reports and maps showing assets and opportunities for quality of life improvement in low-income neighborhoods around access to healthy food.
- Assess the county's food system and other environmental factors impacting health to inform policy change related to improving access to affordable healthy food in low-income neighborhoods.
- Include the Marin Health and Human Services Department in the implementation of city and county general plans as well as development and re-development plans.
- Collaborate with Transportation Authority of Marin, Marin Transit, Marin Public Works Association, and other transportation stakeholders to identify transportation routes and address transportation gaps from underserved neighborhoods to health food retail, with a focus on bicycle and pedestrian access.

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

Mi Pueblo Foods Supermarket San Rafael, CA

Mi Pueblo, a Hispanic grocery store, just opened in the Canal neighborhood of San Rafael. Mi Pueblo is the first full-service grocery store in this predominantly low-income community. Besides increasing the availability of fresh produce, Mi Pueblo is a source of employment. According to an article in Marinscope, the company recently hired 175 employees, many who are residents of the Canal. Assistant San Rafael City Manager Jim Schutz said the store would fill an important economic niche in the community and could draw more commerce to the Canal neighborhood. "Mi Pueblo has shown a great deal of success in other locations. I'm familiar with the San Jose location from working there, and it really helped revitalize that whole area. We hope that vitality will come to this area; we're looking for that spark."

Source: Jones, Paul, "Mi Pueblo opens to throngs of patrons" Marinscope Newspaper, March 24, 2010.

www.marinscope.com/articles/2010/03/24/news_pointer/news/doc4baabb3f92837501077337.txt

Successful Strategies, Initiatives, and Toolkits

- Public Health Law and Policy has a variety of relevant resources (models, initiatives, toolkits):
 - Planning for Healthy Places project: Community solutions around land use, economic, and community development policies to increase access to healthy food and physical activity www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning.
 - How to include health in county and city general plans: www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/create_implement_gp
 - Land use planning and the food system: www.phlpnet.org/system/files/CFSCNEWSSP07_FNL.pdf
 - How to make healthy changes in your neighborhood (8 steps to get more fruits and vegetables in your neighborhood through county and city general plans): www.phlpnet.org/system/files/healthystores.pdf
 - Active Living by Design (www.activelivingbydesign.org) produced a comprehensive paper that includes strategies for creating healthy eating and active living environments www.convergencepartnership.org/atf/cf/%7B245A9B44-6DED-4ABD-A392-AE583809E350%7D/CP_Promising%20Strategies_printed.pdf
 - Food System Alliance a county-wide collaboration to build a vibrant, healthy, and durable food system: www.foodsystemalliance.org
 - PolicyLink (www.policylink.org) Some relevant reports include:
 - Policy strategies that can shape county and city general plans to support increased access to affordable healthy foods in low-income neighborhoods (see page 6): <http://www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97C6D565-BB43-406D-A6D5-ECA3BBF35AF0%7D/Healthy%20Food%20For%20All-8-19-09-FINAL.pdf>
 - PolicyLink is involved working with the city of Richmond, California to include health in the city's general plan: <http://www.policylink.org/site/c.lkIXLbMNJrE/b.5137443/apps/s/content.asp?ct=6965455>
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Policy Option 2: Adopt, implement, and monitor zoning policies to restrict fast food outlets within low-income neighborhoods

Background

For most communities in the U.S., especially in African American and low-income neighborhoods³⁰, residents often rely on fast food outlets, which primarily sell processed foods high in fats and sugars.^{31,32}

This situation is not different from Marin County. Marin City, a 94% low-income community with a majority of African American residents,^{33,34} presents a critical need for accessibility to affordable fresh vegetables, and whole and culturally appropriate foods rather than its current five fast food outlets.

“The most effective involvement of government agencies in communities happens when they are supported by a trusted community-based organization.”
- Dan Dawson, AICP, Principal
Transportation Planner and Planning
Commissioner for the City of Novato,
Marin County Department of Public Works

Opportunities in Marin County

- Partner with the Marin Department of Health and Human Services, Epidemiology Program and the Healthy Marin Partnership to generate data reports and maps that can inform policy change and zoning laws related to the high concentration of fast-food outlets in low-income neighborhoods.

- Impose fees to fast-food outlets located in Marin’s low-income communities to contribute toward a general county fund directed at providing healthy food options, specifically in low-income communities.

Successful Strategies, Initiatives, and Toolkits

- Robert Wood Johnson, Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity — Five-strategy guide that can have a significant impact on the availability of healthy foods, such as policies related to land use, transportation, comprehensive planning, and community and economic development: www.rwjf.org/files/research/accesshealthyfoodsllhc2007.pdf
- Leadership for Healthy Communities - www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org
Action Strategies Toolkit on Quality Nutrition in Schools; Supermarkets and Healthy Food Vendors; Farm-Fresh Local Foods; Restaurants; Food and Beverage Marketing:
www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=352&Itemid=154

Policy Option 3: Adopt, implement, and monitor county and city policies that require local/convenience stores located in low-income neighborhoods to offer or increase offerings of affordable healthy foods

Background

Many underserved lower-income urban and rural communities do not have grocery stores, and many minority residents without cars rely on corner stores and bodegas as their primary sources of food. The majority of these stores typically stock and serve only unhealthy pre-packaged foods, snacks, and sodas. A study examining the associations between children’s diets and access to different types of food stores found that youth who had greater access to convenience stores consumed fewer fruits and vegetables.³⁵ There also are strong links between the availability of healthy food in neighborhood stores and residents’ diets.^{36, 37} Research indicates that greater availability of healthy food in stores was related to greater availability and increased consumption of healthy food at home.^{38,39}

Some challenges in Marin County associated with this policy option include: (1) there is limited data related to geographic locations of healthy food sources and health outcomes; (2) many small convenience stores do not have the infrastructure or the capacity to connect with the appropriate distribution networks (e.g., local farmers) to offer healthy foods; and (3) some small convenience stores offer healthy food options that are bought through retail wholesalers and then mark up the retail price to make a profit.

Opportunities in Marin County:

- Form collaborations with public agencies, cbos, and residents to implement incentives to local/convenience stores and restaurants located in low-income neighborhoods to offer affordable healthier food options on their food menus (e.g., create a healthy food store certification program that uses healthy food ratings).
- Encourage economic development and community development agencies to offer grants or low-interest loans to support small convenience stores’ purchase of equipment and training for the proper handling and storage of fresh produce.

- Encourage community-based organizations to partner with small convenience stores to determine appropriate fresh fruit and vegetable distribution networks and business plan to increase capacity to offer healthy fresh foods at lower prices.
- Partner with the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services Wellness Collaborative and community-based organizations to organize and engage community residents in low-income neighborhoods to monitor quality and prices of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Tax junk food incentives provided to store owners by food corporations and use revenue for a neighborhood fund to convert junk food outlet into healthy food outlets.

Successful Strategies, Initiatives, and Toolkits

- Sonoma Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) — Increased healthy food options at local corner stores located within a .5 mile from school grounds and provided incentives to fast-food outlets to offer healthy foods:
www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm
 For a detailed table with objectives, strategies, activities, timelines:
www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm
 Food Outlet Project — This implementation project converted food outlets into healthy food outlets by providing technical assistance: www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm
 - PolicyLink-Case studies, toolkits, policy strategies to improve access to affordable healthy food in low-income neighborhoods: www.policylink.org
 - Strategies to improve existing neighborhood stores in low-income neighborhoods as a way to improve access to healthy food (see page 10): www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97c6d565-bb43-406d-a6d5-eca3bbf35af0%7D/HFHC_SHORT_FINAL.PDF
 - Partnership efforts between low-income communities with food retailers to increase the offerings of affordable healthy foods:
www.policylink.org/site/c.lkIXLbMNjRE/b.5137443/apps/s/content.asp?ct=6994449
 - Robert Wood Johnson-Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity:
 - Five-strategy guide that can have a significant impact on the availability of healthy foods, such as policies related to land use, transportation, comprehensive planning, and community and economic development: www.rwjf.org/files/research/accesshealthyfoodsIhc2007.pdf
 - Action strategies to bring healthy foods to your neighborhood, in particular page 69 Part 2 of Healthy Eating: Strategies on how to attract grocery stores to low-income neighborhoods and how to encourage local/convenience stores to offer healthier food:
www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org/images/stories/toolkit/lhc_action_strategies_toolkit_0900504final.pdf
 - Leadership for Healthy Communities - Action Strategies Toolkit on Quality Nutrition in Schools; Supermarkets and Healthy Food Vendors; Farm-Fresh Local Foods; Restaurants; Food and Beverage Marketing:
www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=352&Itemid=154
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Policy Option 4: Adopt, implement, and monitor county and city policies requiring and/or incentivizing that all food sources (supermarkets, grocery stores, local/convenience stores, farmers markets, and farm stands) accept public assistance programs (e.g., EBT/Food stamps)

Background

In order to encourage greater access to and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables among low-income Americans, the United States Department of Agriculture operates the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/EBT) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to complement the Federal Food Stamp Program and provide greater purchasing power at farmers markets. Over 4,685 farmers markets across the U.S. provide an opportunity to connect consumers with fresh, local produce and to provide farmers with additional revenue.⁴⁰ As a result of the success of these programs, low-income families are able to purchase healthy foods at reduced prices in farmers markets. In 2000, these benefits were expanded to seniors with the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program.⁴¹ Studies have demonstrated that the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program for elders and low-income families may lead to improvements in their intake of fruits and vegetables.^{42,43}

LOCAL PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Marin Agricultural Institute - Marin Farmers Markets
The Food Stamp Program designed to assist low- or no-income people meet basic food needs by providing coupons to purchase food evolved into Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), which added difficulties for farmers markets to transition to the new system due to lack of infrastructure. Marin Agricultural Institute developed the needed infrastructure for farmers to accept EBT and WIC transactions at the Civic Center Farmers Market in San Rafael.

Source: Grown in Marin Newsletter, September 2009
groups.ucanr.org/GIM/Grown_in_Marin_Newsletter_Articles/Healthy_and_local_food_for_all.htm
archive.constantcontact.com/fs043/1102259806232/archive/1102856854216.html

Opportunities in Marin County

- Create public/private partnerships to leverage resources needed to improve infrastructure for more businesses selling healthy foods to accept EBT cards and WIC vouchers.
- Create economic incentives for low-income residents to shop at farmers markets and farm stands.

Successful Strategies, Initiatives, and Toolkits

- Wholesome Waves Foundation implemented the "Double Value Coupon Program," which doubles EBT and WIC benefits when recipients use them to purchase healthy, locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers markets: www.wholesomewave.org/community_dv.html
- Marin Agricultural Institute - Marin Farmers Markets: groups.ucanr.org/GIM/Grown_in_Marin_Newsletter_Articles/Healthy_and_local_food_for_all.htm
archive.constantcontact.com/fs043/1102259806232/archive/1102856854216.html
- Public Health Law & Policy - Toolkit for advocates to identify and work with prospective WIC vendors, and to help these retailers upgrade their offerings in accordance with the new, healthier WIC food packages (www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/products/changes-wic-food-packages-toolkit-partnering-neighborhood-stores)
- Robert Wood Johnson, Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity — Strategies for improving access to healthy foods including improving the intake of fruits and vegetable through the

"California has one of the lowest EBT (i.e. Food stamps) participation in the U.S. due in part to the requirements at the state level that are not required by the federal government."

- Heather Wooten, MCP, Senior Planning and Policy Associate, Public Health Law & Policy

LOCAL PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Canal Community Gardens and Trails Collaborative – Developing Community-Supported Agriculture Projects: A Community Garden and Patio Gardens in the Canal.

This collaborative creates and promotes gardens and trails to encourage healthy eating and physical activity among Canal residents. The collaborative includes several community-based organizations and public agencies (Canal Alliance, City of San Rafael, College of Marin, Healthy Marin Partnership, Marin Conservation Corps of North Bay, Marin County Board of Supervisors, Marin County Department of Health and Human Services, Marin Organic, Marin Food Systems Project, National Parks Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance, Rebuilding Together, Safe Routes to Schools, and Trust for Public Land).

As a result of the collaborative efforts, the Trust for Public Land received funds from the Marin Community Foundation to complete a study with the design, feasibility, and fundraising plan for the Canal community garden. The study took into consideration community input gathered by the collaborative through several focus groups and public meetings. The study has been completed and is being presented to the city for final approval. The garden is scheduled to open in 2011 at a city property lot located in Bellam Avenue (next to Picante restaurant).

The collaborative has also spearheaded the development of small or patio gardens in the Canal. To date, gardens have been installed in the 211 Canal, 355 Larkspur, 330 Canal, and Alto & Larkspur buildings. Additionally, gardens are scheduled to open this year at the 78 Novato and 91 Larkspur buildings.

Farmers Market Nutrition Programs for elders and low-income women in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):

www.healthyeatingresearch.org/images/stories/her_research_briefs/her%20bringing%20healthy%20foods%20home_7-2008.pdf

Paper describes how a farmers market has incorporated WIC, food stamp, and senior nutrition programs, as well as other health promoting initiatives through the market:

www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/webfm_send/9

- Guide for state and local officials to facilitate healthy eating by adopting policies that help communities improve access to affordable, healthy foods for all residents:
www.rwjf.org/files/research/accesshealthyfoodsllhc2007.pdf
 - PolicyLink — Strategies to improve local/convenience stores and start/sustain farmers markets by promoting nutrition assistance programs (SNAP EBT, WIC) and connecting them with government resources (TA) (see page 14 & 16): www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97c6d565-bb43-406d-a6d5-eca3bbf35af0%7D/HFHC_SHORT_FINAL.PDF
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Policy Option 5: Adopt, implement, and monitor county and city policies that improve the design, planning, and implementation of urban agricultural efforts (e.g., community gardens) in low-income neighborhoods

Background

According to the American Community Gardening Association, an increasing number of community gardens have been established on vacant lots in inner cities. More than 10,000 community gardens exist in the United States. In addition to increasing residents' access to fresh produce, community gardens provide residents with environmental education, green space, and significant savings on their food.⁴⁴

“The biggest challenges to developing gardens are the [city] general plans. City general plans complicate re-zoning ordinances prohibiting growing organic vegetables on city properties. Everyone trying to get gardens is facing this issue.”
- Donna West, Marin Department of Health and Human Services

Low-income neighborhoods in Marin County can benefit from the development and maintenance of community gardens. The existing community gardens are not necessarily tailored to serve low-income residents, and school gardens located in low-income neighborhoods are only accessible to students and their families and operate only when schools are open.⁴⁵

Opportunities in Marin County

- Garner political will for additional community gardens/urban agricultural efforts by assessing and publicizing the impact of gardens on community residents' health and well-being.
- Implement the necessary amendments to county and city general plans (e.g., change land use/zoning policies, change permit issuing procedures) to facilitate the implementation of community gardens/urban agricultural projects in low-income neighborhoods.
- Develop “Joint Use Agreement” efforts to open up school facilities for community use where school districts, local governments, and community-based organizations share costs and responsibilities of the facilities.

Successful Strategies, Initiatives, and Toolkits

- Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden: groups.ucanr.org/GIM/Indian_Valley_Organic_Farm_%26_Garden
- Public Health Law & Policy — developed a toolkit with joint use models to increase physical activity opportunities in low-income communities that can be replicated to develop a joint use garden: www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/products/joint_use_toolkit
- Active Living by Design produced a comprehensive paper that includes strategies for creating healthy eating and active living environments: www.convergencepartnership.org/atf/cf/%7B245A9B44-6DED-4ABD-A392-AE583809E350%7D/CP_Promising%20Strategies_printed.pdf See page 7 strategies group #5. Establish joint-use agreements that allow use of public schools and facilities for recreation by the public during non-school hours.
- Public Health Law & Policy developed a toolkit for establishing land-use protections for community gardens www.nplanonline.org/nplan/products/establishing-land-use-protections-community-gardens

“City general plans should be reviewed to facilitate re-zoning ordinances that allow the growth of organic fruits and vegetables on city properties.”
- Donna West, Marin Department of Health and Human Services

- Robert Wood Johnson, Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity:
 - Potential strategies for improving access to healthy foods, including developing community gardens:
 - www.healthyeatingresearch.org/images/stories/her_research_briefs/her%20bringing%20healthy%20foods%20home_7-2008.pdf
 - Case studies and lessons learned about developing community gardens and the importance of culturally-tailored programs
 - www.activelivingbydesign.org/sites/default/files/HEbD_Lessons_from_communities_FINAL2.pdf
 - PolicyLink: This report describes a strategy to link farmers to consumers through community gardens as a way to improve access to healthy food (see page 10 & 18-19):
 - www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97c6d565-bb43-406d-a6d5-eca3bbf35af0%7D/HFHC_SHORT_FINAL.PDF
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Policy Option 6: Adopt, implement, and monitor county and city policies that increase the availability of affordable healthy food throughout the year in low-income neighborhoods

Background

Many low-income neighborhoods have a high concentration of fast-food restaurants and small convenience stores that only sell processed foods that are high in fats and sugars. One study found that adults living in areas with one or more supermarkets were more likely to meet dietary recommendations for fruits and vegetables than adults living in areas with no supermarkets.⁴⁶ In addition, research suggests that greater access to supermarkets may be related to a reduced risk of obesity, while greater access to convenience stores may be related to an increased risk for obesity.^{47, 48, 49, 50}

Recent efforts in Marin County are addressing this situation. This year, Mi Pueblo, a full-service grocery store, opened its doors in the Canal neighborhood of San Rafael, increasing the availability of fresh produce in this mostly low-income Hispanic community. As well, this spring 2010, the Marin Farmers Market will open its eighth market at the Gateway Shopping Center in Marin City, a predominantly low-income neighborhood with a majority of African American residents.^{51,52}

Opportunities in Marin County

- Build coalitions among community-based organizations, businesses, city and county agencies, and residents to identify potential healthy food sources (e.g., supermarkets, grocery stores, local/convenience stores, farmers markets, farm stands, community gardens) that will increase the access of affordable healthy foods in low-income neighborhoods.
- Implement the necessary amendments to county and city general plans (e.g., change land use/zoning policies, change permit issuing procedures) in order to facilitate the identification of sites and the establishment of healthy food sources in low-income neighborhoods.
- Offer city and county incentives (e.g., tax incentive) to grocery or food stores willing to build or establish themselves in low-income communities in Marin County.
- Form partnerships with community-based organizations, public agencies, and educational institutions to generate data reports and maps showing the assets and opportunities for quality of life improvement in low-income neighborhoods around access to healthy food.
- Assess the county's food system and other environmental factors impacting health to inform policy change related to improving access to affordable healthy food in low-income neighborhoods.

- Include the Marin Health and Human Services Department in the implementation of city and county general plans as well as development and re-development plans.
- Collaborate with Transportation Authority of Marin, Marin Transit, and other transportation stakeholders to identify transportation routes and address transportation gaps from underserved neighborhoods to health food retail.
- Collaborate with fresh produce gleaning programs in Marin to increase availability of affordable healthy food in low-income communities.

Successful Strategies, Initiatives and Toolkits

- Public Health Law & Policy toolkit to attract grocery stores to communities: www.phpnet.org/healthy-planning/products/getting-to-grocery
- Robert Wood Johnson - Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity:
 - Strategies for city planners, nonprofit groups, and private businesses to attract supermarkets to underserved neighborhoods and strategies for improving the availability of fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods
www.healthyeatingresearch.org/images/stories/her_research_briefs/her%20bringing%20healthy%20foods%20home_7-2008.pdf
 - This report describes the challenges and success community organizations faced in bringing a supermarket to their community www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/webfm_send/12
 - This article presents action strategies to bring healthy foods to your neighborhood, in particular page 69 of Part 2, Healthy Eating, where it describes strategies on how to attract grocery stores to low-income neighborhoods and how to encourage local/convenience stores to offer healthier food
www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org/images/stories/toolkit/lhc_action_strategies_toolkit_0900504final.pdf
- PolicyLink:
 - Strategies behind developing new grocery stores, improving quality and selection of food in existing smaller stores, and starting and sustaining farmers markets:
www.policylink.org/site/c.lkIXLbMNJrE/b.5137405/k.6042/Healthy_Food_Retailing.htm
 - This guide is a part of broader initiatives by PolicyLink and Bay Area Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). The two organizations joined together to organize a meeting held on November 1, 2007, in San Francisco, California, to discuss key challenges and potential solutions for attracting more grocery stores to low-income communities. This report provides nuts-and-bolts resources to help communities organize a coordinated strategy for grocery store attraction: www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97C6D565-BB43-406D-A6D5-ECA3BBF35AF0%7D/groceryattraction_final.pdf
 - This reports describes a strategy to develop new grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods and how to start/sustain farmers markets as ways to improve access to healthy food (see page 10): www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97c6d565-bb43-406d-a6d5-eca3bbf35af0%7D/HFHC_SHORT_FINAL.PDF
- The Food Trust (www.thefoodtrust.org) focuses on bringing grocery stores and farmers markets to communities. It works with planning departments to identify areas that need grocery stores and offer incentives to draw stores to the community. It operates about 30 farmers markets in the Philadelphia region and is expanding to other states.
- Petaluma Bounty, a community food gleaning program that redistributes surplus food and provides affordable fresh food to low-income families and seniors: www.petalumabounty.org
- Respecting Our Elders, an all-volunteer nonprofit providing free surplus foods to seniors and other in Marin: respectingourelders.org

V. About the Authors

Celia Graterol has worked in public health research and organizational development for more than 10 years. Celia conducts single- and multi-site, multi-cultural, community-based evaluations, assessments, and strategic planning efforts for nonprofit organizations, universities, and philanthropic institutions. Her main research interests include systemic factors producing health disparities among communities in the US based on income and ethnicity as well as economic development efforts that bring stability to low-income families and their neighborhoods.

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VII. Appendix

Appendix A: Methodology

The research team’s approach in capturing the necessary information that would inform a policy scan in Marin County was to reach out to local Bay Area leaders and experts from various foundations, public programs, agencies, and organizations that are at the forefront in the field of social determinants of health (SDH). Successful policies and initiatives were examined, particularly around access to healthy eating and active living environments in low-income communities.

A Key Informant interview instrument was developed based on an extensive evaluation of new and existing data and research around SDH impacting obesity and chronic health problems and diseases in low-income Hispanic and African-American communities in Marin County. Epidemiologic health data was also extracted from GIS maps provided by the Marin Department of Health and Human Services. It also took into account Marin Community Foundation’s focus on the two critical priority areas of need: 1) Access to healthy and affordable food; and 2) Access and opportunities for safe physical activity. The instrument was designed to identify any existing issues around access to healthy eating and active living in Marin County’s low-income communities that may result in an opportunity for policy work around these issues. Additionally, the instrument was designed to capture successful program and initiative interventions as well as lessons learned that may be beneficial in the development of a local policy scan.

The Key Informant interview selection involved leaders and individuals from organizations within and outside Marin County who were currently working on policies around access to healthy eating and active living environments and have been successful in low-income school and community settings. The initial key informant interviews generated a wealth of information, including additional leads for other potential interviews and contacts. The Key Informants served as a valuable resource for pertinent and useful research and background information, such as program and initiative websites, toolkits, and other research articles and leads that were influential and greatly shaped the policy options for this report.

Appendix B: Key Informant Instrument

Key Informants Questionnaire

1) Do you know of best practices, efforts, and/or initiatives that focus particularly on reducing health disparities by increasing access to affordable, locally grown healthy foods that could be applicable to Marin County?

2) Are there current efforts underway in Marin to reduce health disparities by increasing access to affordable, locally grown healthy foods?

What is the scope of the project?

Will the project require/result in policy change?

Which organizations have been critical partners for the success of these efforts or initiatives?

How frequently do they meet?

What has been the funding supporting this effort?

3) Do you know of best practices, efforts, and/or initiatives that focus particularly on reducing health disparities by increased opportunities for safe walking/biking/exercising that could be applicable to Marin County?

4) Are there current efforts under way in Marin to reduce health disparities by increased opportunities for safe physical activity (walking/biking/exercising)?

What is the scope of the project?

Will the project require/result in policy change?

Which organizations have been critical partners for the success of these efforts or initiatives?

How frequently do they meet?

What has been the funding supporting this effort?

5) What new local policies could help improve access to healthy affordable, locally grown food for underserved residents? (e.g., school policies, public policies)

Which organizations are well-positioned to work on these policy changes?

6) What new local policies could help improve opportunities for physical activity among underserved residents? (e.g., school policies, public policies?)

Which organizations are well-positioned to work on these policy changes?

7) Where can I find or who should I talk to obtain data/information on resources/report/toolkits about current access to affordable healthy foods and walkability/bikeability/physical activity of communities (particularly in low-income and people of color communities)? Are there community assessments with this data/information—e.g., healthy and unhealthy food access assessment in the county particularly in low-income communities, assessment of the local Marin food system around food access and security (how networks can communicate better, how can the food distribution network (food pantries, kitchens, markets, farmers markets, community gardens, etc.) be improved to better coordinate affordable sustainable quality access to healthy foods, opportunities for safe walking/biking/exercising (particularly in low-income communities), crash/injury data?

8) What type of data should we request from public agencies and Supervisors that could inform advocacy work to increase access to affordable healthy foods and improve opportunities for safe physical activity, particularly in low-income and people of color communities?

9) Aside from access to healthy food and physical activity, are there other issues in the built environment that you see as a major determinant of poor health outcomes among low-income communities and people of color in Marin County—e.g., sustainable built-in environment policies around land use, zoning, urban planning, green building, etc.)?

10) Any other information you would like to provide that I may not have asked about?

Appendix C: Glossary Of Research and Resources

This alphabetical glossary provides a comprehensive list of successful strategies, research articles, toolkits, and other resources from foundations and organizations with experience around policies addressing Social Determinants of Health impacting healthy eating and active living environments.

A

- **Active Living By Design (ALBD)** — Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Program, ALBD creates community-led change by working with local and national partners to build a culture of active living and healthy eating.
 - Strategies for the adoption of greenway master plans and pedestrian friendly street design guidelines: www.activelivingbydesign.org
 - Strategies for access to affordable healthy food and physical activity, creating healthy eating and active living environments: www.convergencepartnership.org/atf/cf/%7B245A9B44-6DED-4ABD-A392-AE583809E350%7D/CP_Promising%20Strategies_printed.pdf
 - See page 6 strategies group 1: Information on supporting physical activity as part of everyday life: access to parks and green spaces; implementation of complete streets; infrastructure improvements (e.g., trails and bike paths); review how safe routes really are; etc.
 - See page 7 strategies group #5: Ensure that children can walk and bicycle safely to school, and promote Safe Routes to School programs that include both infrastructure projects (engineering) and non-infrastructure activities (education, encouragement, implementation, and evaluation)
- **Amber Waves, US Dept. of Agriculture** — National organization that audits low-income neighborhoods that do not have access to healthy food options: www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/March10/Features/FoodDeserts.htm
- **Bay Area Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative (BANPAC)** – Healthy vending machine policies and toolkits: www.banpac.org/healthy_vending_machine_toolkit.htm

C

- **California Project LEAN** — Statewide initiative working with school districts and school stakeholders to address and limit the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages on school campuses:
 - **Community Activity & Nutrition Coalition (CAN-C) of Sonoma** — County-wide initiative with over 50 partners, this county-led, Kaiser-funded Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) project looks to increase the availability of healthy foods that people can afford.
School Sector Summary: www.sonomacounty.org/health/prev/pdf/heal_school_sector_summary.pdf
School Action Plan: www.sonomacounty.org/health/prev/pdf/heal_school_action_plan.pdf

D-F

- **Farm-to-School Programs** — provides an approach to connecting small farms to the school meal programs, encourages small farmers to sell fruits and vegetables to schools, and supports schools in their efforts to buy locally: www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/webfm_send/35.
- **Food System Alliance** — Established in San Mateo County in 2006, this county-wide collaboration between producers, farm workers, conservationists, health care workers, food security activists, chefs, and consumers now includes Sonoma, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Yolo counties working together to build a healthy and durable food system: www.foodsystemalliance.org
- **From Farm to Cafeteria Conference** — sponsored by the National Farm-to-School Network: farmtocafeteriaconference.org

G

- **Growing Green** — A nonprofit garden and nutrition education organization dedicated to inspiring children and adults to adopt healthy eating habits through classroom nutrition lessons, school gardens, and community events: www.growinggreat.org/aboutusmenu
- **Gleaning programs** — See Petaluma Bounty under P and Respecting Our Elders under R.

H

- **Harvest of the Month - Network for a Healthy California** — Statewide strategies designed to motivate and empower students to increase consumption and enjoyment of a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables. www.harvestofthemonth.com/download/How-To-Guide.pdf
- **Healthy Eating Active Communities (HEAC)** — Statewide initiative funded by The California Endowment.
 - Link to toolkits and resources to develop, implement, and monitor school wellness policies around nutrition: www.healthyeatingactivecommunities.org/resources1_2.php
 - Link to toolkits and resources to develop, implement, and monitor school wellness policies around physical activity: www.healthyeatingactivecommunities.org/resources11.php
- **Healthy by Design** — An initiative of the Sonoma Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) - Sonoma County Department of Health Services (See resource under S): a multidisciplinary effort of health planning, human services, sustainability advocates from public agencies, community-based organizations, and Sonoma State University to look at links between health and the built environment. This initiative works to review county and city general plans.
- **Healthy Eating Research** — Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, describes strategies on how to attract grocery stores to low-income neighborhoods and how to encourage local/convenience stores to offer healthier food: www.healthyeatingresearch.org/images/stories/her_research_briefs/her%20bringing%20healthy%20foods%20home_7-2008.pdf

I

- **Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden** — College of Marin, Marin Conservation Corps, and UC Cooperative Extension developed a successful 5.8-acre certified organic demonstration farm and garden. Implemented at the Indian Valley of College of Marin, this project is part of an academic program for organic farm and garden and environmental landscaping students at the college. This effort provides research-based information in agriculture, natural resource management, nutrition, and youth development: groups.ucanr.org/GIM/Indian_Valley_Organic_Farm_%26_Garden

J-L

- **Leadership for Healthy Communities (Funded by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation)** — A \$10 million national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation designed to support local and state government leaders nationwide in their efforts to reduce the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015 through public policies that promote active living, healthy eating, and access to healthy foods: www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org
 - The Action Strategies Toolkit contains policy and program strategies in 10 action areas related to active living and healthy eating. The five actions areas for healthy eating include: Quality Nutrition in Schools, Supermarkets and Healthy Food Vendors, Farm-Fresh Local Foods, Restaurants, and Food and Beverage Marketing: www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=352&Itemid=154

M-N

- **Marin Organic** — www.marinorganic.org
- **Marin Agricultural Institute** — www.agriculturalinstitute.org
- **Marin Agricultural Institute — Marin Farmers Markets**
[groups.ucanr.org/GIM/Grown in Marin Newsletter Articles/Healthy and local food for all.htm](http://groups.ucanr.org/GIM/Grown%20in%20Marin%20Newsletter%20Articles/Healthy%20and%20local%20food%20for%20all.htm)
archive.constantcontact.com/fs043/1102259806232/archive/1102856854216.html
- **National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA)** — Model of Local School Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition: www.banpac.org/pdfs/healthy_vending/nana_model_policy.pdf
- **National Policy and Legal Analysis Network** — How to Implement a Wellness Policy Toolkit:
nplanonline.org/files/ImplementWellnessPlcy_FactSheet_web_FINAL_090219.pdf
- **Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Project (NTPP)** — Awarded Marin County (one of four selected communities nationally) to participate in and receive \$25 million for improvements for walking and bicycling: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/ntpp.htm
- **Novato Unified School District** – Farm-to-school program: www.farmtoschool.org/state-programs.php?action=detail&id=4&pid=64

O-P

- **Playworks** — National nonprofit organization that supports learning by providing safe, healthy, and inclusive play and physical activity to schools at recess and throughout the entire school day: www.playworksusa.org
- **Petaluma Bounty** — a community food gleaning program redistributing surplus food and providing affordable fresh food to low-income families and seniors: www.petalumabounty.org
- **PolicyLink** — a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity. This site offers many case studies, toolkits, and policy strategies to improve access to affordable healthy food in low-income neighborhoods: www.policylink.org
 - This reports includes policy strategies that can shape county and city general plans to support increased access to affordable healthy foods in low-income neighborhoods:
www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97C6D565-BB43-406D-A6D5-ECA3BBF35AF0%7D/Healthy%20Food%20For%20All-8-19-09-FINAL.pdf
 - This link describe an effort PolicyLink is involved working with the city of Richmond, California to include health in the city's general plan:
www.policylink.org/site/c.lkIXLbMNjRE/b.5137443/apps/s/content.asp?ct=6965455
 - This toolkit addresses how-to strategies behind developing new grocery stores, improving quality and selection of food in existing smaller stores, and starting and sustaining farmers' markets:
www.policylink.org/site/c.lkIXLbMNjRE/b.5137405/k.6042/Healthy_Food_Retailing.htm
 - This report describes a strategy to improve existing neighborhood stores in low-income neighborhoods as a way to improve access to healthy food www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97c6d565-bb43-406d-a6d5-eca3bbf35af0%7D/HFHC_SHORT_FINAL.PDF
 - This link describe partnership efforts between low-income communities with food retailers to increase the offerings of affordable healthy foods:
www.policylink.org/site/c.lkIXLbMNjRE/b.5137443/apps/s/content.asp?ct=6994449
 - This reports describes a strategy to develop new grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods and how to develop/sustain farmers markets as ways to improve access to healthy food (see page 10); strategies to improve local/convenience stores and start/sustain farmers markets by promoting nutrition assistance programs (SNAP EBT, WIC) and connecting them with government resources (TA) (see page 14 &16):
www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97c6d565-bb43-406d-a6d5-eca3bbf35af0%7D/HFHC_SHORT_FINAL.PDF
 - This report describes a strategy to link farmers to consumers through community gardens as a way to improve access to healthy food (see page 10 & 18-19): www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97c6d565-bb43-406d-a6d5-eca3bbf35af0%7D/HFHC_SHORT_FINAL.PDF
 - This guide is a part of broader initiatives by PolicyLink and Bay Area Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). The two organizations organized a meeting held on November 1, 2007, in San Francisco, California,

to discuss key challenges and potential solutions for attracting more grocery stores to low-income communities. This report provides resources to help communities organize a coordinated strategy for grocery store attraction: www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97C6D565-BB43-406D-A6D5-ECA3BBF35AF0%7D/groceryattraction_final.pdf

- Strategies to improve local/convenience stores and start/sustain farmers markets by promoting nutrition assistance programs (SNAP EBT, WIC) and connecting them with government resources (TA) (see page 14 & 16): www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97c6d565-bb43-406d-a6d5-eca3bbf35af0%7D/HFHC_SHORT_FINAL.PDF
- **Public Health Law & Policy (PHLP)** — Offers a variety of relevant resources (models, initiatives, toolkits): www.phlpnet.org
 - PHLP's School Health Law Project: works with school nutrition advocates to improve or eliminate contracts with food and beverage companies: Fact sheets and resources: www.schoolhealthlaw.org/publications.html
 - Planning for Healthy Places Project: consists of community solutions around land use and economic and community development policies to increase access to healthy food and physical activity www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning.
 - How to include health in county and city general plans: www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/create_implement_gp
 - Land use planning and the food system: www.phlpnet.org/system/files/CFSCNEWSSP07_FNL.pdf
 - How to make healthy changes in your neighborhood (eight steps to get more fruits and vegetables in your neighborhood through county and city general plans): www.phlpnet.org/system/files/healthystores.pdf
 - Toolkit for advocates to identify and work with prospective WIC vendors, and to help these retailers upgrade their offerings in accordance with the new, healthier WIC food packages: www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/products/changes-wic-food-packages-toolkit-partnering-neighborhood-stores.
 - Toolkit with joint use models to increase physical activity opportunities in low-income communities that can be replicated to develop a joint use garden: www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/products/joint_use_toolkit
 - Toolkit for establishing land use protections for community gardens: www.nplanonline.org/nplan/products/establishing-land-use-protections-community-gardens
 - Toolkit to attract grocery stores to communities: www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/products/getting-to-grocery
 - Toolkit to regulate chain restaurants to provide healthier food and beverage options for children: www.phlpnet.org/phlp/products/model-california-ordinance-restaurant-giveaways

Q-R

- **Respecting Our Elders** — An all-volunteer nonprofit providing free surplus foods to seniors and other in Marin: respectingourelders.org
- **Robert Wood Johnson, Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity** — A national organization dedicated to reversing the childhood obesity epidemic by changing public policies and creating healthier environments in schools and communities.
- Toolkits on school Wellness policies regarding nutrition:
 - www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/content/school-nutrition
 - www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/webfm_send/35
- Toolkits on school Wellness policies regarding physical activity: www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/content/physical-activity-school
- Resources on school zoning policies: www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/content/school-nutrition
- Resources on farm-to-school policies: www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/content/school-nutrition
- Resources on school Marketing policies:
 - www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/content/school-nutrition
 - www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/webfm_send/35

-
- Potential strategies for improving access to healthy foods, conducting needs assessment, market feasibility studies, identifying potential store sites. Page 69 Part 2:
www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org/images/stories/toolkit/lhc_action_strategies_toolkit_0900504final.pdf
 - Guide for state and local officials to facilitate healthy eating by adopting policies that help communities improve access to affordable, healthy foods for all residents:
www.rwif.org/files/research/accesshealthyfoodslhc2007.pdf
 - Potential strategies to improve overall access to healthy foods, including access to fruits and vegetables through the Farmers Market Nutrition Program for elders and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) as well as developing community gardens (see page 4-6):
www.healthyeatingresearch.org/images/stories/her_research_briefs/her%20bringing%20healthy%20foods%20home_7-2008.pdf
 - This paper describes how a farmers market has incorporated WIC, food stamps, senior nutrition programs, as well as other health promoting initiatives through the market:
www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/webfm_send/9
 - Case studies and lessons learned about developing community gardens and the importance of culturally-tailored programs:
www.activelivingbydesign.org/sites/default/files/HEbD_Lessons_from_communities_FINAL2.pdf
 - Strategies for city planners, nonprofit groups, and private businesses to attract supermarkets to underserved neighborhoods. Also strategies for improving the availability of fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods:
www.healthyeatingresearch.org/images/stories/her_research_briefs/her%20bringing%20healthy%20foods%20home_7-2008.pdf
 - Challenges and successes community organizations faced in bringing a supermarket to their community:
www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/webfm_send/12
 - This guide explores how state and local officials can facilitate healthy eating by adopting policies that help communities improve access to affordable, healthy foods for all residents. It highlights five strategies that have a significant impact on the availability of healthy foods, such as policies related to land use, transportation, comprehensive planning, and community and economic development. It also outlines steps that policy-makers are taking in schools and government institutions across the country to help increase access to nutritious food options: www.rwif.org/files/research/accesshealthyfoodslhc2007.pdf
 - Action strategies to bring healthy foods to your neighborhood. Page 69 of Part 2 Healthy Eating, describes strategies on how to attract grocery stores to low-income neighborhoods and how to encourage local/convenience stores to offer healthier food:
www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org/images/stories/toolkit/lhc_action_strategies_toolkit_0900504final.pdf

S

- **Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)** — Established in 2005, through SAFETEA-LU federal transportation bill funding which included a national investment in infrastructure, SRTS provides important benefits to children and their communities, including increasing physical activity, reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality, and enhancing neighborhood safety: www.saferoutesinfo.org
 - SRTS National Partnership is a network of more than 400 nonprofit organizations, government agencies, schools, and professionals working together to advance the Safe Routes to School) movement in the US. The partnership focuses on policy and advocacy work at national, state and local levels around transportation, education, health and the environment: www.saferoutespartnership.org
- **School Water Fountains Project** — increased water consumption and decreased obesity among students: well.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/30/school-water-fountains-to-prevent-obesity/
- **Sonoma Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL)** — Increased healthy food options at local corner stores located within a ½ mile from school grounds and provided incentives to fast food outlets to offer healthy foods. HEAL has done critical work with general plans (land use around bike lanes, zoning to allow gardens). HEAL gives mini-grants to community-based organizations to involve the community (leadership training program,

develop community gardens), and has also worked with food outlets to increase availability of healthy foods: www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm

- School sector summary: www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm
- School action plans: www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm
- School wellness policies, planning, and implementation tools: <http://www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm>
- Table with objectives, strategies, activities, timelines: www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm
- Food Outlet Project-This year-long implementation project works to convert food outlets into healthy food outlets by providing technical assistance, including annual assessments, recognitions, MOUs with the outlet store and addressing corporation product placement and incentive offerings: www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm
- Sonoma Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) - gives mini-grants to COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (Kaiser \$) to involve the community (leadership training program) to develop community gardens: www.sonoma-county.org/health/prev/heal.htm

I

- **The Food Trust** — Operating with about 30 farmers markets in the Philadelphia region and expanding to other states, TFT , focuses on bringing grocery stores and farmers’ markets to communities, by working with planning departments to identify areas that need grocery stores and offer incentives to draw stores to the community: www.thefoodtrust.org
- **Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM)** — The Marin Congestion Management Agency (CMA), which is a Joint Powers Agency established between the County and cities to address Marin's unique transportation issues and to fulfill the legislative requirements of Propositions 111 and 116, approved in June 1990. The agency was created for the purpose of administering the sales tax Measure A. The Authority is responsible for programming funding for all transportation programs in Marin County. The TAM Board includes representatives from each city and town in Marin County, plus the five members of the Board of Supervisors.
 - Canal neighborhood transportation plan: www.tam.ca.gov/index.aspx?page=160

U

- **Urban and Environmental Policy Center for Food & Justice, Occidental College** — A LAUSD model called Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) that ties consumers directly to a local or regional farm. “Fresh From the Farm Pilot Project” established a direct connection between the classroom and a Southern California organic farm. Description: departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfi/publications/fresh_from_the.htm
Full report: www.farmtoschool.org/files/publications_91.pdf
- **US Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic safety Administration** — Safe Routes to School National Model: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/Safe-Routes-2002/

V-Z

- **WalkBikeMarin, NTPP** — An initiative by the County of Marin to help make Marin more healthy, livable, and environmentally sustainable by encouraging walking and bicycling as everyday transportation. This initiative was catalyzed by the NTPP funds. The goal of the WalkBikeMarin website is to provide information about all the county’s bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs in one place: www.walkbikemarin.org
- **Wholesome Waves Foundation** — Implemented the “Double Value Coupon Program,” which doubles EBT and WIC benefits when recipients use them to purchase healthy, locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers markets: www.wholesomewave.org/community_dv.html
- **W.K. Kellogg Foundation** — www.wkkf.org