

# GOOD LAWS, GOOD FOOD: PUTTING FOOD POLICY TO WORK IN THE NAVAJO NATION



## Section VI: Access to Healthy Food Summary and Handout

### Overview

People are more likely to buy healthy food if it is conveniently located. Unfortunately, the ten full service grocery stores on the Navajo Nation predominantly offer unhealthy, highly processed food, and high calorie options. The fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy food items that are stocked by grocery stores often cost more and are available in limited quantities. Many rural communities do not have any grocery stores at all, and the foods available at gas stations and convenience stores are mostly high calorie, heavily processed food items. This section describes strategies and resources that advocates can use to increase access to healthy foods by increasing farmers markets, promoting healthy store initiatives, increasing mobile food vending, and improving the transportation system.

### Recommendations

#### Farmers Markets and Other Direct-to-Consumer Sales

- Create a Best Practices Guide for establishing and operating farmers markets.
- Push for local farmers markets to accept federal food assistance benefits as payment.
- Incentivize the use of food assistance benefits at farmers markets.

#### Healthy Corner Store Initiatives

- Increase healthy foods in small stores through a healthy corner store initiative that provides technical assistance and resources to stores.
- Use tax measures to incentivize corner stores to purchase and stock healthy food, or discourage consumer purchasing of unhealthy food.
- Encourage nutrition education and other healthy activities at corner stores.
- Leverage private sector investments to create funds for healthy food initiatives.
- Prioritize food-related proposals in awarding funds from Navajo government programs.
- Require corner stores to stock healthy foods.

#### Mobile Food Vending, Delivery Services and Transportation

- Support mobile food vendors by developing resources that explain the zoning and permitting processes for mobile vending.
- Expand the Navajo Transit System.