**Healthy Food Small Retail Program (HFSRP) Outreach Script Template**

***Instructions****:* Use this script as a guide for reaching out to store owners at small retail food venues in North Carolina counties that are eligible for equipment reimbursable by the NC Healthy Food Small Retail Program (HFSRP). **Application for funding must be submitted by January 31, 2018, for priority consideration. Applications will continue to be accepted through March subject to availability of funds.** All stores in North Carolina that are located in food deserts as defined by the UDSA are eligible to apply.

***Why is equipment needed?*** Refrigeration and storage equipment is often a significant barrier to stocking healthy food in small retail venues. Store owners are encouraged to apply for HFSRP funding as an important way to increase capacity of stores to improve access to healthy foods in their communities. [Enter your organization’s name and how you can help support the store] For questions about the role of [Organization Name] in small retail work, please contact [Point of Contact] at [Email] or [Phone].

**Store Owner Outreach Script:**

**Approach register when there are not customers in line:** *Is the store owner available?*

**If store owner is not available:** *My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am with [Organization Name]. Do you know of a good time for me to come back to speak with the owner?*

**If store owner is available:** *My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I with [Organization Name]. The NC General Assembly has provided funding to help small stores like yours supply your communities with healthier food options by reimbursing your store for refrigeration, freezers, and stocking equipment for these foods. Do you have a few minutes to talk about this opportunity?*

**If store owner is busy:** *I’ll leave a copy of the 1 page application with you to review. When might be a good time for me to come back to discuss this opportunity? If the application is submitted by January 31, 2018, it will receive first consideration. After January 31, applications will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis as long as funds are available.*

**If store owner is willing to talk:** *You may have already received a copy of this letter from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services inviting you to apply to take part in the NC Healthy Food Small Retailer Program. This program supports the health of your communities by improving access to healthier foods in your region. In order to qualify to participate in this pilot program, you must meet the following criteria:*

* *Have no more than 3,000 square feet of heated floor space*
* *Be an established for-profit business*
* *Not previously received HFSRP funds*
* *Be in a USDA designated food desert*
* *Accept SNAP and WIC benefits or agree to apply to become a SNAP/WIC vendor*

*There are a number of reasons why we encourage you to participate in this program:*

1. *Research shows that more than 50% of consumers say they would visit community stores more often if more healthier foods were available.*
2. *By selling more healthy foods purchased from local farmers and food manufacturers, your store will contribute to the economic health of your community and provide an option for your residents to spend their money in their own community.*
3. *Your store will contribute to the short- and long-term physical health of your community by increasing the availability and access to healthier foods, which can contribute to lower rates of obesity and chronic disease.*

*In addition to refrigeration, freezers, and shelving provided through the HFSRP, [Enter more specific info about how your organization can help the store increase access to healthy food]*

*We recognize that refrigeration, freezers, and stocking equipment is often a barrier for small retail venues to stock healthy options. Because of this, we would like to encourage interested stores to take advantage of the HFSRP funding opportunity. However, [Organization Name] is not involved in selection of stores to receive HFSRP funding. Stores who apply for HFSRP funding are not required to participate in [Organization Name] programming. Receiving support from [Organization Name] is not dependent upon receiving HRSRP funding.*

*Here is a copy of the* ***HFSRP Application.*** *If it is submitted by January 31, 2018, you will receive priority consideration to participate in the Healthy Food Small Retailer Program. Applications received after that date will be reviewed on a first come, first serve basis. The application does NOT obligate you to participate in the program, but will allow the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to talk with you further about the program, and answer any questions you have. If you are interested in participating in the HFSRP, I can help you complete the short application now.*

**Note:** If a store owner asks a question that you are unsure of how to answer, tell them to contact the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to talk with them further about their interest and answer any questions.

For other questions specific to HFSRP funding or the application, store owners can contact the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences at HealthyRetailer@ncagr.gov or (919)707-3173.