



Funding Toolkit

INTRODUCTION

Healthy for Life® is a community-based nutrition and well-being program created by Aramark and the American Heart Association that empowers people to make healthy food and lifestyle choices. Together, we encourage people to change food and health attitudes and behaviors – equipping them with new skills and habits for healthy living.

The program incorporates interactive components such as demonstrations on healthy cooking, shopping skills, proper nutrition and heart health. Since inception, churches, community centers, schools and health centers nationwide have used the program, resulting in increased:

- Fruit and vegetable consumption
- Frequency of choosing whole grains
- Confidence in ability to improve their health
- Confidence in ability to prepare healthy meals at home

Healthy for Life improves key health behaviors in varying dosages and delivery methods. In particular, the program suggests a minimum of four educational experiences over 2-3 months to ensure behavior change.



PURPOSE OF THE TOOLKIT

While the expenses to execute the program are minimal, any costs can deter implementation for some community centers. The Healthy for Life Funding Toolkit equips community center staff with the knowledge **to secure funding** to deliver four educational experiences over 2-3 months from funders and local partners (i.e., grocery store, gym, restaurant, etc.). The optimal amount to execute the experiences is \$2,500.

Fundraising 101



IDENTIFYING FUNDERS

To get started, identify the businesses you'd like to approach to ask for donations.

Grocery stores (chain and local) – Grocery stores are a logical option to promote the program and branding. Chain stores often have budgets for community relations (gift cards, product, etc.), and local stores often like to get their name out in the market to potential customers.

Chain retailers – Like chain grocery stores, other “big box” national/regional chain retailers sell food and kitchen utensils. A department store that sells homewares could also be a good prospect.

Gyms, fitness centers, fitness retailers –

An important part of Healthy for Life is exercise. Gyms and exercise equipment/clothing retailers may respond to the opportunity to market to new members/customers. Many of these stores are franchises, so local managers may have more control of philanthropic budgets.

Churches – Many local churches have budgets to help the community. Think about where you, your members and/or your volunteers worship and reach out to their community relations people.

Volunteer connections – Think about volunteers you already partner with and where they work or who they know. Fundraising is all about relationships, so the person asking is key.

The Ask

Now that you've compiled your list of businesses to reach out to, draft a succinct “pitch.” Your contacts will want to know what the program is, its impact and what's in it for them. Craft your message based on whether you're asking over the phone, in person or via voice mail.

PHONE

If you're cold calling a business, you won't have much time to state your case. Ask to speak to the manager, because he or she will most likely oversee their donation budget. If you have time, research that person's name and ask for him or her specifically. Many grocery stores list their managers' names on their website. Once he or she answers, frame your request like this:



SAY: *Hi, < manager name >. My name is < ____ >, and I'm calling to ask you to support a local program that < your community center name > is implementing.*



It's called Healthy for Life, and we work right here in < your city > to inspire families to make healthy food choices part of their everyday lives.



Research shows almost half of the participants increased their confidence to prepare meals at home and keep their pantry well-stocked.



We thought < business name > would be a perfect fit for this program. Will you consider donating < specific ask > to help our cause?

VOICEMAIL

Most likely, you'll get the manager's voicemail when you call the store. The message will sound similar to the phone call, but with a few tweaks because you need a hook to get them to call you back. A specific ask isn't suggested with this approach.



SAY: *Hi, < manager name >. My name is < _____ >, and I'm calling to ask you to support a local program that < your community center name > is implementing.*



*It's called **Healthy for Life**, and we work right here in < your city > to inspire families to make healthy food choices part of their everyday lives.*



Research shows almost half of the participants increased their confidence to prepare meals at home and keep their pantry well-stocked.



We'd like to count on < business name > to support our participants and the community.



Will you please call me back at < xxx-xxx-xxxx > to discuss an opportunity to partner with us?

IN-PERSON

Stopping by a business can be a great way to create an immediate rapport with a manager because your presence can reinforce your authenticity. But beware that many managers deal with angry customers and might be on guard when you approach them. Since you'll have a conversation, you don't have to squeeze as much into your first few words.



SAY: *Hi, < manager name >. My name is < _____ >, and I'm the < title > at < your community center name >.*



*We're implementing a program called **Healthy for Life** that inspires families to make healthy food choices part of their everyday lives.*



Research show almost half of the participants increased their confidence to prepare meals at home and keep their pantry well-stocked.



We'd like to promote < business name > as a supporter of the program. Will you consider donating < specific ask > to help?

Your maximum ask should be **no more than \$2,500** to sufficiently fund four Healthy for Life classes.

After the initial ask, be prepared to provide additional information about the program, as you have a great opportunity to explain how their business can benefit and impact the community. Be prepared with specific suggestions, but be open to other recommendations because each business will likely see value and partnership as unique to their needs and resources.

Demographics and Outcomes

As a facilitator, you can talk about the intricacies of the program and how it has helped community members. To ensure the funder is supporting a successful program that reaches its target audience, they might want more information about the overall participants and outcomes.

Here you will find data from a national sample of Healthy for Life participants that may compel a business to support your program.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- African-American (74 percent), Hispanic (18 percent), white (7 percent)
- Female (79 percent)
- ≥One child under 18 years at home (34 percent)
- Completed high school or more (80 percent)
- Receive SNAP (food stamp) benefits (19.2 percent)
- Fifty percent of participants are the only person making meal preparation decisions or share responsibility in the home.

RESULTS

- Forty-three percent have increased their confidence in improving their health.
- More than one-third now substitute healthier cooking and preparation methods and make food more flavorful with herbs or seasonings instead of salt.
- More than half now seek lower-sodium options when they eat out.
- Forty-seven percent of participants lowered their consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages by nearly half.
- Eight percent exceeded the program goal of a 20 percent increase in fruit and vegetable consumption.

What's in It for Me?

Businesses get approached from many groups for contributions and donations, so it is helpful to make a case of how supporting your program can benefit their business.

THEIR BUSINESS WILL BE PROMOTED TO ALL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

If they donate money, you can recognize them with signage at the community center, table tents in the program room, etc. If they donate in-kind, their store label may be visible on the products they donate, or you can verbally recognize them at the beginning of the class. Some stores have branded giveaways such as coolers, tote bags, etc.; these could be used as incentives to encourage continued participation.

THEIR BUSINESS WILL BE PROMOTED TO ALL COMMUNITY CENTER MEMBERS

If they donate a sizeable amount, consider writing a story for your newsletter or bulletin board in the community center, or sharing via social media or blog posts.

ALLOW THE LOCAL STORE TO PROMOTE THE PROGRAM

The business may want to promote their involvement to their customers, so consider using testimonials from Healthy for Life participants that the manager could post in-store with a display about Healthy for Life.

Follow-Up

Don't be discouraged if you don't get a call-back or you feel like you're getting the runaround. Persistence is key. If you commit to following up, do it – it sounds simple, but so many people don't do what they say they will. If the business commits to following up and doesn't, check back in.

On average, it takes 3-7 contacts before you receive a contribution. Don't be a pest if they outright decline, but don't be scared to leave multiple voicemails or pop in a few times until the manager is available to talk to you.

A handwritten note or personal thank-you email can also go a long way to building a relationship and setting you apart from other groups asking them for donations. Even if they don't contribute immediately, they may in the future. So nurture the relationship and always thank them, even if they say no.

Tips

NAME DROP

If a volunteer or someone you know has suggested a business because of a relationship that volunteer has, always start your pitch/message with that person's name. Example: "Hi, <store manager>. Joe Smith (your mutual connection) suggested I call you because..." Fundraising is all about relationships, and those first, few seconds are key. If the funder hears a name they recognize, they're more apt to listen to what you have to say.

BE SPECIFIC

Funders need to know an amount range or idea of what you need. If you ask for generic support, they might just give you a bag of apples and send you on your way. If you ask for a \$2,500 gift card, the manager has a better understanding of the scope of the project and how their commitment can help.

CREDIBILITY IS KEY

Businesses get asked for donations every day, and they want to know that their contribution is going where you say it is. A business card or a request on your community center's official letterhead can give your request legitimacy. If you're walking in to ask in person, wear a shirt with your community center's logo.

KNOW YOUR 501c(3) NUMBER

To contribute dollars or in-kind gifts, many businesses need your 501c(3) number for tax purposes.

Please visit heart.org/HealthyForLife to access other helpful resources.