

BATON ROUGE'S HEALTHY FOOD RETAIL INITIATIVE FAQs

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

What is the Baton Rouge Healthy Food Retail Initiative?

This initiative is a program to encourage supermarket/grocery and retail development in underserved areas of East Baton Rouge Parish. By providing funding for healthy food retail expenses, this will enable operators and vendors to open, expand and renovate outlets that sell fresh fruit and vegetables. This initiative could also provide opportunities for neighborhood revitalization.

Funding Provided by



Build Baton Rouge



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

Hope Enterprise Corporation (HOPE) is the initial contact for inquiries about the initiative.
www.hopecu.org/brhfri | brhfri@hopecu.org
504-585-2860



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Project Eligibility

What projects are eligible?

Eligible projects must expand fresh food offerings in lower income and underserved neighborhoods in East Baton Rouge Parish. Eligible applicants include grocery chains, individual grocery stores, neighborhood stores, co-ops and other food projects such as farmer’s markets and food hubs.

All applicants are strongly encouraged to accept SNAP and WIC benefits.

Can an existing grocery store or other outlet apply?

Yes, an existing grocery retail outlet may apply, if it plans to substantially improve the store’s ability to stock and sell a variety of non-prepared foods or food products intended for home preparation, consumption and utilization.

Is there a minimum store size?

There is no minimum store size, as long as the store makes a commitment to provide fresh fruits and vegetables and meets other program guidelines. The applicant must demonstrate that significant shelf space (suggested minimum of either 15 percent of the current or future store shelf space or 24 linear feet of shelf space, whichever is greater) is dedicated to the sale of fresh fruit and vegetables.

What if my project is outside of an eligible parish?

If your project is not located in East Baton Rouge Parish, flexible financing may still be available for grocery projects through other programs. Please contact HOPE for more information.

Uses of Funds

What can Healthy Food Retail Initiative (HFRI) funds be used for?

- Pre-Development
- Site Assembly and Improvements
- Construction and Rehabilitation
- Grocery Store Equipment
- Inventory
- Working Capital

What are the terms and rates on the loans?

Interest rates for the HFRP Program will be determined by HOPE during the underwriting and approval process based on risk. Generally, interest rates will range from the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) Prime Rate to the WSJ Prime Rate, plus 3%. The length of the loan term will depend on the financing needs of the borrower (projected cash flow and activities/items being financed). All financing must be approved by HOPE’s Credit Committee.

Application Process

How does the application process work?

Applying for financing from the HFRI is a two-step process:

(1) Eligibility Determination: First, the applicant completes the Eligibility Application to determine whether the proposed project is consistent with the goals and objectives of the program. Incomplete applications will delay assessment. Applicants should complete the application and submit to Hope. Hope will work with The Food Trust to determine if the applicant is eligible to apply for funding from HFRI.

(2) Financing Approval: If eligible, applicants will be asked to complete a business loan application and provide required supporting documentation.

How do I prepare supporting documentation?

Complete information is imperative. It is important to include any information you believe would demonstrate that your project is consistent with the HFRI program’s goals.

Where can I get an application?

Applications can be downloaded from www.hope-ec.org/brhfri.

Why is the Program Necessary?

What are the impacts of lack of access to healthy foods?

Where you live affects your health. People living in neighborhoods with relatively few grocery or produce outlets have a significantly higher prevalence of obesity and diabetes. According to a report by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2016), Louisiana had the highest rate of adult obesity in the country, according to the 13th annual State of Obesity report. The obesity rate in the state stood at 36.2 percent in 2015, up from 34.9 percent in 2014 and just 22.6 percent in 2000.

Key strategies for decreasing and preventing obesity target increasing behaviors such as healthy eating and getting adequate exercise in a variety of settings like homes, schools, and workplaces. Community level intervention includes the promotion of affordable healthy food environments, such as grocery stores and farmer’s markets, especially in underserved areas.

What is the consensus among leading public health experts about this issue?

Leading public health experts indicate that increasing access to healthy food in low access areas is a necessary component to a comprehensive approach to improving public health and preventing obesity and other chronic diseases.