



Healthy Stores
Refrigeration
Program

FINAL REPORT

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Why the Healthy Stores Refrigeration Program?

Some communities, commonly known as food deserts, have limited access to affordable and nutritious food. Living in a food desert can negatively impact your health and nutrition, lead to obesity, and make it harder to know where you'll get your next meal. Often, food desert communities are also disproportionately affected by poverty, pollution, and other challenges. With COVID-19 forcing us all to stay closer to home, these communities have been even further restricted in their food choices.

Small businesses in these communities may not have the time, money, or specialized knowledge to address the problem. So, the Healthy Stores Refrigeration Program (HSRP) was created to help local businesses become part of the solution.

Administered by the County of Los Angeles, funded by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), and implemented by local nonprofit The Energy Coalition, the Healthy Stores Refrigeration Program provided energy efficient refrigerators for corner stores and small businesses located in food deserts and low-access areas. Store owners stocked their new refrigerators with healthy food options, like California-grown fruits, nuts, vegetables, and minimally processed prepared foods. The program also provided educational materials and training to store owners on successfully sourcing, marketing, and selling healthy products.

Joining this program was an easy way for store owners to save on energy usage while providing fresh and healthy food options for the communities they serve.



Our outreach team at Metro Market, the first corner store recipient of HSRP's energy efficient refrigerators

Strengthening Los Angeles County's **small businesses**

84 stores

We exceeded our goal and supported over 80 stores through the program

141 units

We helped LA County small businesses install 141 new energy efficient refrigerators



“LA County residents depend on their local community grocers for everyday needs [...] Through the Healthy Stores Refrigeration Program, the County is committed to making healthy food accessible. Together, we can begin to address the lack of healthy and affordable food items so our communities can thrive.”

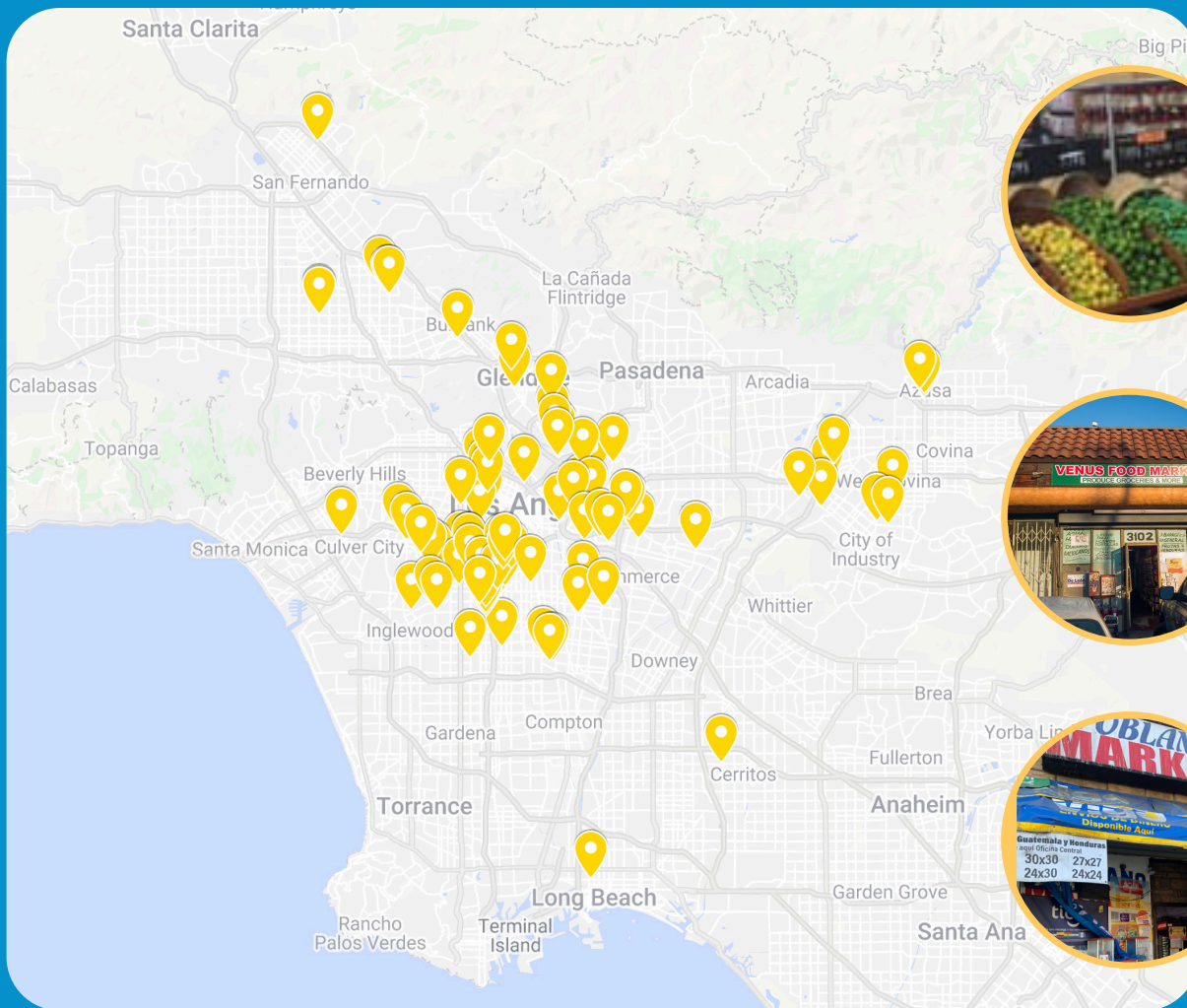
LA County Board of Supervisors Chair
Hilda Solis, Supervisor to the First District

“Thank you to the Refrigerator Program for these awesome refrigerators. We are a small business [...] and having these awesome refrigerators will provide healthier choices to our community.”

Ricardo Lopez
Placita La Oaxaquena

New refrigerators (left) and street view (right) of Placita La Oaxaquena, a program participant

Supporting food desert communities across Los Angeles County



La Incomparable Market

Before HSRP, La Incomparable Market had to carry fruit and vegetables to the back of the store because of broken equipment they couldn't afford to fix. Now, they are beyond excited about their new fridge!



Venus Food Market

Venus Food Market had a lot of fresh food going bad because they could not afford \$6,000 in fridge repairs. Now, they can provide more healthy, fresh food with a new fridge!



Poblano Market

Poblano Market has been a part of its neighborhood for more than 30 years, and Federico, the owner, feels lucky to support his diverse patrons. They are grateful to have a great working refrigerator to stock with fresh fruits.

See appendix for full list of participating businesses

Our Work

The Healthy Stores Refrigeration Program made it easy for busy small business owners to replace their less efficient refrigeration equipment with new energy efficient fridges. We vetted refrigerator options and provided store owners with a simple list of twelve pre-approved refrigeration units, each with various size options and pre-negotiated pricing. Our team conducted in-person outreach whenever possible (in compliance with local COVID-19 regulations) to build relationships with store owners and make sure they were comfortable with the entire process, including their refrigerator selection.



In-store marketing materials encouraged healthy food choices

Throughout our relationships with store owners, we shared energy saving tips, options for sourcing healthy foods, and guidance on storing fresh foods. Many store owners were interested in receiving additional education opportunities about healthy food purchasing and storing practices. Several stores received “sandwich boards” and stickers to promote healthy food at their location.

We hosted pop-up events at several participating stores, funded through an additional Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) grant. At pop-up events, we shared resources on energy savings and healthy foods, such as a book of healthy recipes, and provided other giveaways such as reusable HSRP tote bags for future shopping.

Participants were really delighted with the program! Not only did it promote healthy food options for the community, but they loved the energy savings and how easy it was to participate.



A pop-up event at Soto Street Market

Our Process

- 1 Outreach team visited stores in eligible program areas
- 2 Store owners indicated if they were interested in receiving a free energy efficient fridge to stock with healthy food options
- 3 Outreach team assisted store owner with interest form
- 4 Store owner completed CDFA pre-survey for program participation
- 5 Store owner worked with outreach team to select their new fridge(s)
- 6 Outreach team took accurate measurements of store entry ways and proposed fridge location(s)
- 7 Outreach team checked paperwork internally and placed fridge order with ARCA Recycling, Inc. (ARCA)*
- 8 ARCA filled the fridge order, then delivered and installed the fridges to the stores, recycling the old unit if needed (for “like for like” upgrades)
- 9 Outreach team contacted the store to provide educational materials and offer to host a pop-up event, then hosted one if desired
- 10 Outreach team contacted the store owner to conduct a CDFA post survey

* ARCA Recycling, Inc. (ARCA) offers comprehensive turnkey appliance recycling programs. HSRP partnered with ARCA for appliance procurement, installation, and recycling.



The Summit SCR49SSG and Turbo Air TGM-72SD-N, our most popular equipment upgrade options

Our Story

Adapting to Meet Community Needs

We adapted the Healthy Stores Refrigeration Program several times to better meet community needs. While the program was originally designed to be supported through the Southern California Regional Energy Network (SoCalREN), another Los Angeles County service that offers energy efficiency resources and programs for residents, businesses, and public agencies, instead SoCalREN supported HSRP by providing Green Path Career Fellows to conduct community outreach.

During initial outreach, we saw that store owners did not have access to technology to complete online forms. So, the program adapted our process to help store owners complete program forms and a pre-survey in-store on tablets or phones.

By adapting to external factors outside of our control (such as COVID-19), and accommodating customer needs, we were able to successfully complete program objectives and support small businesses in food desert communities.

Working with Hard-to-Reach Business Owners

While HSRP's target participants were "hard-to-reach" demographically, they were also hard-to-reach in the literal sense. We had a tough time communicating with store owners who were busy running their

businesses and not frequently checking emails or voicemails. So, when COVID-19 restrictions permitted, we made outreach staff available in-person to assist with enrollment and answer questions.

Los Angeles is a linguistically diverse city. In the LA metro area, at least 185 languages are spoken at home. In fact, 54 percent of people in the LA metro area

who are over five years old don't speak English at home (US Census American Community Survey 2009-2013). Language barriers were initially a challenge for program outreach, preventing small business owners from finding out about the program and from participating. In response, we identified staff with bilingual skills and provided materials in communities' preferred language whenever possible. The HSRP team is proud to have designed a turnkey direct install program with in-language materials that made it easy for stores to participate.

Overcoming COVID-19's Challenges

The Healthy Stores Refrigeration Program ran from late 2020 through early 2022, during the peak of COVID-19 restrictions in the United States. COVID-19



LA County and HSRP were highlighted on ENERGY STAR's landing page for their annual ENERGY STAR Day celebration.

lockdowns exacerbated food desert communities' challenges accessing healthy food and made the program's benefits even more crucial. Yet, lockdowns also restricted our program outreach capabilities. The HSRP team was nimble, adapting outreach based on the latest COVID-19 protocols and using the best available personal protective equipment.

Many program enrollments came through in late 2021, after COVID-19 regulations became less restrictive and we were able to resume in-person outreach. COVID-19 affected supply chains throughout the economy, particularly for large appliances like refrigerators. Some refrigerator units were out of stock, so the program had to contact store owners to select similar in-stock units instead. Due to supply chain delays, program participants that enrolled in late 2021 will likely not receive their new fridges until mid-2022. While our original policy was to reimburse equipment costs once fridges were installed, we worked with CDFA to adjust our policy and provide reimbursements once we confirmed the refrigerator orders with our partners. This ensured reimbursements could be completed before the program concluded.

We were proud to overcome challenges caused by COVID-19 and to be there for communities when we were needed most. We were even able to share other COVID-19 resources for small businesses while conducting community outreach!

At Lupita's Market, we hosted a ribbon cutting event and distributed 100 boxes of fresh healthy food (donated by the Los Angeles County Food Bank) to community members with LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis, District 1.



Featured on:



"We didn't have enough money to invest in buying new merchandise, and this was a good program that actually helped us. It's really good for the Hispanic community; everyone's looking for fresh and healthy food right now." -Frances Sanchez, Lupita's Market

From top to bottom: ribbon cutting ceremony at Lupita's Market, distributing fresh food, and Frances Sanchez outside her business.



Supplementing a Restricted Budget

The program had a generous equipment budget, with a more limited budget for implementation. Because HSRP was focused on hard-to-reach demographics, this proved to be a challenge. The Energy Coalition saw the need for additional implementation funds, then worked with LA County to secure additional grants for in-person outreach staff. Without this additional funding, the program would

not have been able to reach our goal of supporting 80 small businesses. With additional budget allocated to outreach, we could have enrolled additional stores within the authorized equipment budget.

Removing and Recycling Larger Equipment

HSRP partnered with the Los Angeles Food Policy Council and ARCA, a refrigerator recycling company, to manage equipment purchasing, delivery, and recycling. HSRP was not able to recycle old equipment for all stores because of the additional costs associated with removal. Some stores were not able

to participate in the program at all because they had no way of disposing of large units to make space for new ones. However, we were able to secure additional grant funding that allowed for the disposal of a larger unit for one store.

Collaborating with Partners

The Healthy Stores Refrigeration Program aimed to address a myriad of challenges: food deserts, energy waste, and the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses. A program with such expansive goals required expansive thinking and collaboration to succeed. We partnered with SoCalREN's Green Path Career Program, which provided two Green Path Career Fellows to support program engagement. We teamed up with the LA Food Policy Council's Healthy Network Market Stores program to spread the word about the program to local businesses. Finally, we worked with LA County's Wellness Wednesday campaign to share healthy recipes with community members at participating businesses.



HSRP was honored at the LA County ISD's 34th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program. The Program won the "Leading with Excellence" award in the COVID-19 projects category.

Recommendations

While working on this program, we identified several opportunities to improve. Here are the highlights.



Provide additional resources for sourcing California-grown food



Provide a mail-in option for the survey to improve accessibility for participants with limited internet access



Include costs associated with properly removing, recycling, and recovering old refrigeration units in the equipment budget



Expand eligibility to small businesses that do not fit the narrow definition of “corner stores” or “small business grocers”



Expand recycling options to include old freezers and open units



Consider expanding eligible equipment to include freezers and sliding door refrigerators



Allow grant fund to be adjusted between “buckets.” The County secured additional funding to exceed the program goals while underspending by \$600k+. Adjusting where money was invested may have enabled us to exceed the goal by over 50% while remaining within budget.

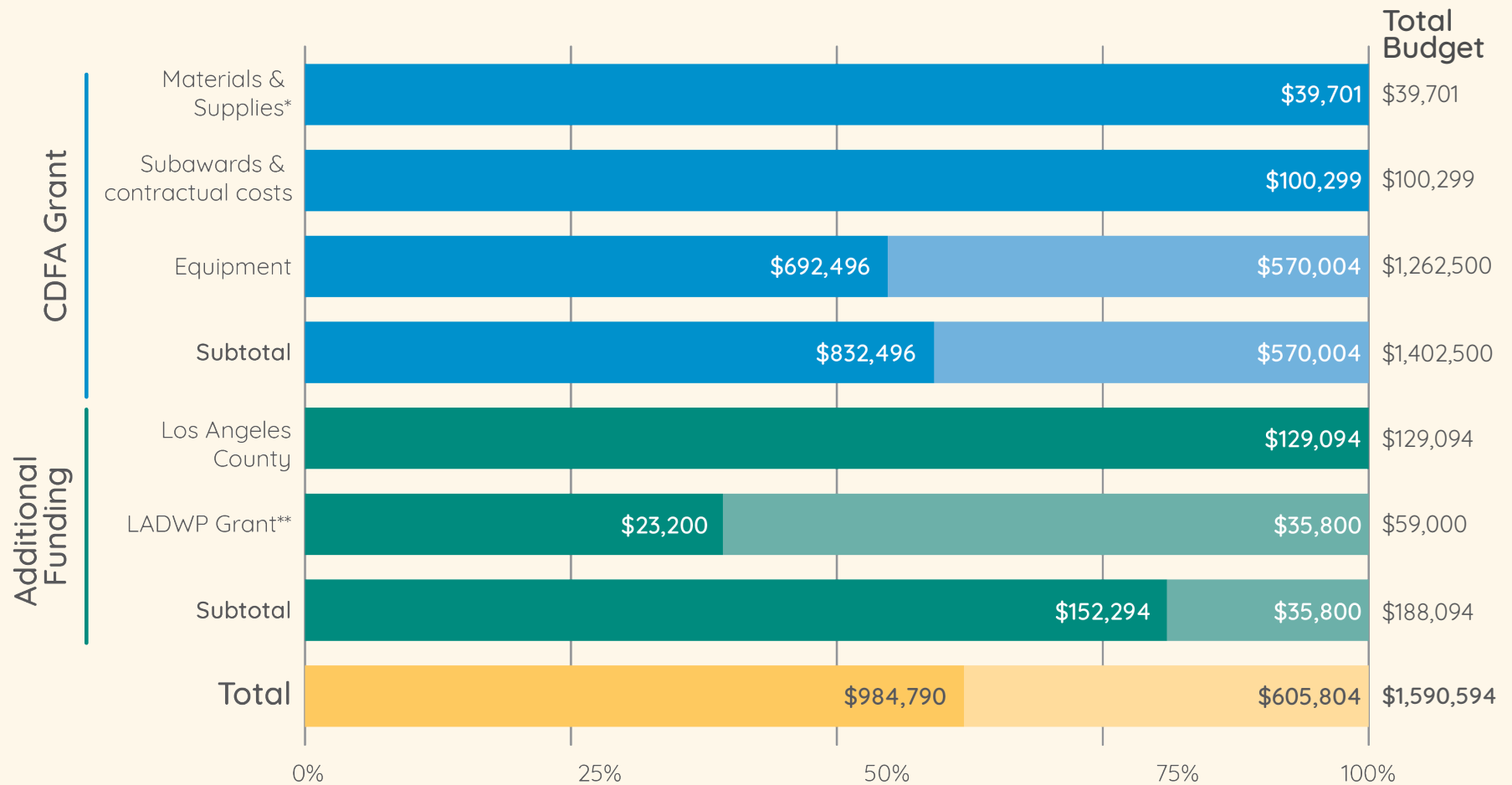


“I am very grateful for the team’s patience and guidance. They made it possible for me to participate in this program. This will help me lower my electric bill and help my customers with a better diversity of food!”

- Farhan Alchekh, Top Market

Financials

The grant amount was sufficient to cover the costs of installing 1-2 refrigerator units for more than 80 stores, but it did not fully fund costs associated with outreach, enrollment, and coordination with store owners. It also did not cover developing, updating, and maintaining data on our work. The grant was supplemented by funding from Los Angeles County and LADWP. The program also experienced unexpected equipment cost increases due to COVID-19 supply chain issues.



* Original materials budget was \$47,500 and subawards budget was \$92,500. CDFA granted approval to shift funds between these two categories.

** Grant period runs through 6/30/22. We anticipate spending all grant funds before the grant period closes.

Thank you to our partners!



Los Angeles County



California Department
of Food and Agriculture



The Energy Coalition



Los Angeles
Department of Water
and Power



Southern California
Regional Energy
Network



Los Angeles County
Food Policy Council



ARCA Recycling, Inc.



Our communities!

Appendix A. Participating Stores

| # | Business Name | Address |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | Metro Market | 2301 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles CA 90019 |
| 2 | Corona Ranch Market | 5903 S. Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90003 |
| 3 | South LA Market | 3991 S Western Ave #9A, Los Angeles, CA 90062 |
| 4 | The Village Mart and Deli | 2200 N. Soto St. Los Angeles, CA 90032 |
| 5 | Soto St Market | 900 N. Soto Street Los Angeles, CA 90033 |
| 6 | Jumbo Market | 3337 Division Street, Los Angeles CA 90065 |
| 7 | Verdugo Mini Mart | 4108 1/2 Verdugo Rd, Los Angeles, CA 90065 |
| 8 | Lupitas Market | 803 Cypress Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90065 |
| 9 | Venus Food Market | 3102 N Eastern Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90032 |
| 10 | Pomona Market | 2747 Lincoln Park Ave #2428, Los Angeles, CA 90031 |
| 11 | Rancho Zapotillo (Super Lopez Produce Market) | 3003 Wabash Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90063 |
| 12 | Ramirez Market | 510 S Atlantic Blvd, Los Angeles 90022 |

| # | Business Name | Address |
|----|------------------------------------|---|
| 13 | With Love Market and Cafe | 1969 S. Vermont Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90007 |
| 14 | Community Outreach Center | 11350 Saticoy St. Sun Valley, CA 91352 |
| 15 | WUnderful Convenience Store | 740 Centinela Ave., Ste. 101. Inglewood, CA 90302 |
| 16 | LB Amigos Market | 404 W Anaheim Street, Long Beach California 90813 |
| 17 | City of Artesia Community Center | 18163 Pioneer Blvd., Artesia, CA 90701 |
| 18 | The Golden Poppy Market & Cafe LLC | 1209 Cypress Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90065 |
| 19 | Pico Gardens Market | 557 S. Clarence St. Los Angeles, 90033 |
| 20 | Quick Mart | 9524 S Main St. Los Angeles CA 90003 |
| 21 | A&A Liquor Market | 111 S Vermont Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90004 |
| 22 | La Fruteria | 1252 W Temple St. Los Angeles, CA 90026 |
| 23 | San Jose Market | 2600 Idell St. Los Angeles, CA 90065 |
| 24 | Maravilla Meat Market | 4732 East Cesar Chavez Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90022 |
| 25 | Stop & Save Discount Store | 12946 Bess Ave, Baldwin Park, CA 91706 |
| 26 | La Cachanilla #3 | 345 N. Azusa Rd. Azusa, CA 91702 |
| 27 | Top Market | 503 N Azusa Ave. Azusa, CA 91702 |

| # | Business Name | Address |
|----|-------------------------------|--|
| 28 | Canyon City Liquor | 424 W. Foothill Blvd. Azusa, CA 91702 |
| 29 | Mack's Liquor | 13248 Valley Blvd. La Puente, CA 91746 |
| 30 | Brooklyn Liquor | 2101 E Cesar E Chavez Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90033 |
| 31 | Ranch Town Market | 522 E Vine, West Covina, CA 91790 |
| 32 | La Puente liquor & market | 1056 N Hacienda Blvd. La Puente, CA 91744 |
| 33 | Snap E Ed Country Liquor | 15823 Amar Rd. La Puente, CA 91744 |
| 34 | Hot & Cool Cafe | 4331 Degnan Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90008 |
| 35 | Zunigas | 3033 W 6th St. Los Angeles, CA 90020 |
| 36 | Placita Market La Oaxaquena | 2880 W. 7th St. Los Angeles, CA 90005 |
| 37 | Fair Market Deli and Curry | 10458 National Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90034 |
| 38 | Vicky's Market | 5506 W Adams Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90016 |
| 39 | Gojo Ethio Market | 3417 South La Brea Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90016 |
| 40 | Community Bridge Housing Corp | 13770 Sayre St. Sylmar, CA 91342 |
| 41 | Right Choice Caribbean Market | 4233 S Crenshaw Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90008 |
| 42 | Yona Market | 4032 W Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90008 |

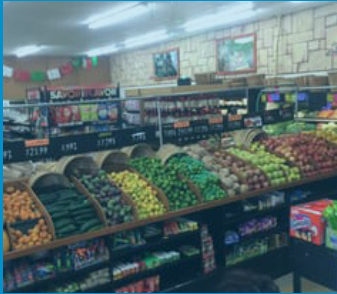
| # | Business Name | Address |
|----|-------------------------------------|--|
| 43 | Rajo African Products Market | 6523 West Blvd, Inglewood, CA, 90302 |
| 44 | Lizza Mini Mart | 973 S Lorena St. Los Angeles, CA 90023 |
| 45 | Fer y Os Mini Market | 635 S Rowan Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90023 |
| 46 | Chavitas Store | 4609 E Cesar Chavez Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90022 |
| 47 | Living Water | 1130 S Western, Los Angeles, CA, 90006 |
| 48 | Maywood Mini Market | 5720 Maywood Ave. Maywood, CA 90270 |
| 49 | Sinai Mini Market | 1820 W 54th St. Los Angeles, CA 90062 |
| 50 | King Blvd Market | 1434 W Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90062 |
| 51 | TNT Market | 1462 W Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90062 |
| 52 | La Incomparable Market | 4140 Whittier Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90023 |
| 53 | Estrella Market Liquor & Carniceria | 13100 Ramona Blvd. Baldwin Park, CA 91706 |
| 54 | Randy's Market | 1958 E 103rd St. Los Angeles, CA 90002 |
| 55 | East End Liquor | 998 E Holt Ave. Pomona, CA 91767 |
| 56 | Montebello Ranch Express | 544 N Montebello Blvd. Montebello, CA 90640 |
| 57 | El Rancherito Mini Market | 6455 Woodman Ave. Van Nuys, CA 91401 |

| # | Business Name | Address |
|----|-----------------------------------|--|
| 58 | Prime Market | 6351 Woodman Ave. Van Nuys, CA 91401 |
| 59 | Yasmin Market | 4425 S Normandie Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90037 |
| 60 | Favorite Market | 533 S Victory Blvd. Burbank, CA 91502 |
| 61 | La Weigand Market | 10626 Weigand Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90002 |
| 62 | Harris Market | 10624 Juniper St. Los Angeles, CA 90002 |
| 63 | La Chiquita Mini Market | 3307 S Florence Huntington Park 90255 |
| 64 | Corner Shop | 559 N Hoover St, Los Angeles, CA 90004 |
| 65 | Paloma Market | 4075 Main St. Los Angeles, CA 90037 |
| 66 | San Miguel Mini Market | 11101 Sherman Way Unit #1-2 Sun Valley, CA 91352 |
| 67 | Fiesta Liquor | 7215 Vineland Ave. Sun Valley, CA 91352 |
| 68 | Emma's Meat Market | 5505 S San Pedro St. Los Angeles, CA 90008 |
| 69 | Old Green Mill | 4520 San Fernando Rd. Glendale, CA 91204 |
| 70 | Poblano Market | 5315 S Vermont Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90037 |
| 71 | Young's Market and Party Supplies | 7522 S Hoover St. Los Angeles, CA 90044 |
| 72 | Susy's Market 2 | 7331 S Hoover St. Los Angeles, CA 90044 |

| # | Business Name | Address |
|----|---------------------------------|--|
| 73 | Broadway Mart | 508 W Broadway, Glendale, CA 91204 |
| 74 | San Isidro Market | 2806 Durfee Ave. El Monte, CA 91732 |
| 75 | Super Tienda Latina Meat Market | 10423 S Normandie Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90044 |
| 76 | KDN Mini Market | 6824 S Hoover St. Los Angeles, CA 90044 |
| 77 | Esperanza Mini Market | 4527 Gage Ave. Bell, CA 90201 |
| 78 | Mi Chapita Mini Market | 5724 S Broadway, Los Angeles, CA 90037 |
| 79 | Village Market Place | 6569 S Vermont, Los Angeles, CA 90044 |
| 80 | Jaylyn Mini Market | 4355 Avalon Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90011 |
| 81 | Oasis Market | 4312 Wall St. Los Angeles, CA 90011 |
| 82 | LA Market | 246 E Martin Luther King Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90011 |
| 83 | La Villa Market | 5257 Compton Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90011 |
| 84 | Hanks Mini Mart | 3301 W Florence Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90043 |

Appendix B. Equipment

| Model | Number of Units |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Summit Appliance SCR49SSG | 74 |
| Turbo Air TGM-72SD-N | 24 |
| Summit Appliance SCR23SSG | 16 |
| Turbo Air TGM-50RS-N | 7 |
| Turbo Air TGM-23SD-N6(-L) | 6 |
| Summit Appliance SCPR4890S | 3 |
| Turbo Air TGM-5R-N6 | 3 |
| Turbo Air TGM-15SD-N6 | 3 |
| Turbo Air TGM-47SDH-N | 2 |
| Summit Appliance SCR610BL | 1 |
| Summit Appliance SCR600BGL | 1 |
| Turbo Air TGM-35SDH-N | 1 |
| Total | 141 |



Selection of participating stores from left to right, top to bottom: Chavitas Store, Fair Market, Fer y Os Mini Market, Gojo Ethio Market, King Blvd Market, La Incomparable Market, Lizza Mini Market, Lupitas Market, Maywood Mini Mart, Metro Mart, Placita La Oaxaceña, Poblano Market, San Jose Market, Sinai Mini Market, Top Market, Venus Food Market, Vicky's Market, Village Market Place, Yasmin Market, and Zuniga Market

