



**EAT
SMART
NORTH CAROLINA:**

*Bring Fresh Produce
to Your Setting*



Eat Smart North Carolina: *Bring Fresh Produce to Your Setting*

Fruits and vegetables are healthy and taste great. Grocery stores provide one option for purchasing produce, however many of us are looking for ways to buy locally grown produce in other convenient settings.

Eat Smart North Carolina: Bring Fresh Produce to Your Setting is a planning and resource guide for anyone who would like to have fruits and vegetables, especially locally grown, available to buy in their worksite, place of worship, neighborhood or at any gathering place through a partnership with a produce vendor. This guide highlights:



A produce vendor could be a local farmer, several farmers, a farmer co-op or a business that markets and sells fruits and vegetables.

- *why fruit and vegetable consumption is important to the health, environment and economy of North Carolina.*
- *options and resources available to work with farmers or produce vendors to bring and sell more locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables to consumers in a variety of settings.*

Benefits to Purchasing and Eating More Locally Grown Fruits and Vegetables

Health, taste and variety—Eating fruits and vegetables is one of the most positive health habits adults and children can have. Unfortunately, less than one in four North Carolinians eat five or more servings a day of fruits and vegetables.¹ People who eat more fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy diet have reduced risks of chronic diseases, including stroke, type 2 diabetes, some forms of cancer and heart disease. People who eat more produce are also more likely to have healthy body weights. Eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables provides a wide range of nutrients and fiber.² Eating plenty of produce is a great way to eat smart while adding color, taste and variety to our diets.

Healthy environment—The average meal in the United States travels 1,300 miles before reaching your plate. A head of lettuce traveling from California to North Carolina uses 36 times more fossil fuel energy in transport than it provides in food energy.³ Supporting local growers helps reduce energy consumption, which in turn is good for the environment. Sustainable farms conserve soil, keep water sources in our communities clean, and provide a habitat for wildlife. Keeping farmers on the land also preserves open space and helps our rural communities remain vibrant places to live.

Healthy economy—It has been estimated that every \$1 spent on locally produced foods returns (or circulates) \$3–\$7 within the community.^{4,5} Consumers buy produce (and other goods) from local farmers, who buy farm supplies from local businesses. Those businesses help to keep people in the community employed, and in turn they spend their money back in the community. This helps to encourage a thriving community and increases economic health. Also, when farmers have direct access to consumers, they are able to keep more of each dollar earned from their sales because the middle-man is eliminated. This increases profits to producers and keeps their farms competitive with the traditional retail chain stores. Purchasing local produce not only improves the local economy, it also helps consumers stretch their food dollars and get high quality fruits and vegetables.

Other Advantages to Purchasing Local Produce

- Produce that is harvested, delivered and/or purchased on the same day has far fewer food safety or contamination risks. Food that travels long distances often passes through many handlers, multiple trucks or storage spaces.
- Farmers are vested in the community where they live and farm.
- Personally interacting with the farmers who grow our food helps us and our children appreciate where our food comes from and creates important social relationships within our community.



Options Available to Bring Fresh Produce to Your Setting

There are many options available in a community to bring fruits and vegetables to the places where people live, learn, earn, play and pray. Choosing the option that is right for your organization will depend on many factors, including your setting, budget, timeline and the farmers/vendors in your community. However, the core of any decision should be choosing the option that best ensures that the distributor of the produce (either a farmer or vendor) will have a consistent and ample source of customers to make it a worthwhile business option, and that customers conveniently get high-quality produce at a competitive price.

Purchasing locally grown produce is a great way to support NC farmers. However, identifying and securing farmers in your community may not always be easy. There are many reasons a farmer may decline to sell by this direct marketing method in your setting. Be patient and ask your local county cooperative extension office and other contacts for assistance or referrals.

Here are some options to explore:

Farmers markets are common facilities or sites where several producers gather on a regular basis to sell various fresh meats, fruits, vegetables and other food products directly to consumers. The market may be incorporated; sponsored by a municipality, business or community-based organization; or simply a gathering place for growers and customers based on tradition. Regardless of its organizational structure, farmers markets allow growers an opportunity to sell their produce directly to consumers while providing consumers access to a variety of local produce in one location.

For more information:

USDA Farmers Market Resource Guide
www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/Consortium/FMCResourceGuide.pdf

Other fresh produce venues

- **Mini mobile markets** are a smaller version of farmers markets and are supported by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The goal of these markets is to assist businesses/organizations in setting up a market day on their property that not only brings nutritious North Carolina grown food to the worksite or community group, but also promotes socializing. The program is designed for any on-site location where people gather (worksite, community center, place of worship) on a regular basis. It is a



way to provide convenient access to healthy food for busy people. Market days are tailored to satisfy the facility's environment (e.g., space, customer needs, etc.). It can be as simple as one farmer and a truck, or it can be an exciting event with cooking demonstrations or wine tasting.

For more information:

Division of Marketing
North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Phone: (919) 733-7887
www.GotToBeNC.com

- **Produce vendor markets** are set up at a given site and resemble a farmers market stand. One or more local produce vendor(s) (generally not a farmer) arrange to sell produce and other goods, which may or may not be locally grown, to consumers. Produce sold may come from state, national or international destinations, similar to items available in a retail setting like a grocery store. While this type of market may be a great way to promote a local fruit and vegetable distributor or may be easier to set up, it may not provide all of the same benefits as the options described above since the produce may not be locally grown.

For more information and a toolkit on this topic:

CDC Garden Market Toolkit
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/gardenmarket/index.htm



Other Options Available

Known by several other names, there are other options for bringing fresh produce into your setting. Variations include community and school gardens, tailgate markets, community co-op stores, farm stands and others. No matter what the name implies or how it is set up, all of these approaches operate with the same goals. They take advantage of common spaces where people gather on a regular basis, making it convenient for the consumer and providing a consistent source of high-quality produce for better health. These strategies bring local economic stability, contribute to a sustainable environment, and create occasions for education and social gatherings. Also, they give consumers a measure of control within the global food system and present a unique opportunity to know where their food comes from and how it was produced.

- **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)** is a direct partnership between a local farmer and individual consumers who commit to a yearly membership subscription. People may join a CSA on their own or as part of a setting-supported program (e.g., a worksite or congregation). CSA members buy shares in a farmer's crop prior to the growing season, and in return they receive a healthy supply of fresh produce (usually weekly) from that farmer throughout the growing season. Farmers may deliver produce to a central (or more than one) pick-up site at a predetermined time, or the CSA members may come directly to the farm on designated days. Most CSAs inform their members in advance which produce items to expect on each delivery day, which helps in making home storage decisions and in menu planning.

Direct produce sales by this advance payment system allows the farmer to receive a fair price and relieves them of much of the burden of marketing during their busy harvest time. Members of the CSA also share in the risks of farming, including unpredictable environmental influences that might affect crop output. There are generally different levels of financial buy-in, which net different amounts of produce at delivery time. Some CSA farms also engage members in assisting with actual work on the farm in exchange for a lower price on their subscription. This shared arrangement creates a sense of personal value, ownership and responsibility for the farmer, the individual and the community. Ultimately, the consumer benefit, in addition to the fresh produce, is the intimacy of knowing the farmer and how the food was produced.

For more information:

USDA's Alternative Farming Systems Information Center
www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/csa/csa.shtml

- **Cooperative produce delivery or a buying club** is a direct partnership between a local produce vendor (e.g., a wholesaler, receiver, distributor and/or importer of fruits and vegetables) and consumers at a site, workplace or neighborhood. Fresh produce is delivered at regular intervals to that site or the members go to the vendor and pick up the produce themselves. People within the site pool their financial resources in order to purchase bulk fruits and vegetables (which may be in any form, and either locally produced or not) at wholesale prices. At the same time, they are building a social network.

Produce items are ordered in advance by the site coordinator, generally arrive or get picked up in bulk quantity, are paid for at the time of delivery or pickup, and are divided up among the buying club customers. This option can feature local/regional produce if you ask for it, as well as national and imported produce. Check with food/produce distributors, fruit and vegetable wholesalers, food brokers or consultants, or the local food service company, restaurant, etc., that they supply.

For more information:

Eastern North Carolina Organics, www.easterncarolinaorganics.com/
National Cooperative Grocers Association, www.ncga.coop/

Steps to Success

Now that you've explored the choices, it's time for action. Not all steps listed here are needed—depending on the option you choose—and there may be additional considerations unique to your location.

Think about these steps when researching and planning a program to meet your group's or organization's needs. Many of these steps can be quickly accomplished with a phone call or conversation.

Partnership and Assessment

- 1. Identify a champion.** This may be you or another person in your setting. A champion is going to make sure that the program is successful by pulling together the partners and the plan and keeping enthusiasm going.
- 2. Talk to agricultural and health professionals** in your community about your options for improving access to locally grown fruits and vegetables in your setting. Research what is already working in your community. Some professionals to talk with include Cooperative Extension Agents, local health department and soil conservation staff, Master Gardeners, local farmers, and North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services officials.
- 3. Assess and ensure management/leadership buy-in.** Determining who this is depends on your organizational structure. In a worksite, it may be an administrative executive, human resource manager, legal counsel, security or property manager, or others with decision-making authority. Regardless of the setting, engaging leadership buy-in is a crucial part of the process. Work with these key people to determine the best options for your setting. Discuss time commitment, responsibilities, the budget and resources available. Be realistic, especially in the beginning. You can always modify or enhance the program once it is established.
- 4. Establish a planning committee.** Seek members with administrative, communication, legal, health promotion, marketing/promotions and gardening or farming experience and expertise.
- 5. Assess need and interest at your setting** to purchase more fruits and vegetables. Consider sending on-line surveys, using a paper survey, or talking informally at gatherings to gauge interest. At larger worksites, the workplace may be willing to host an on-line survey on its website. Make sure there is broad interest and support for bringing produce to your setting to ensure success and ongoing support. You may also want to assess whether people are already able to conveniently attend an existing farmers market in the area. If this is the case, devise a plan to promote the use of the existing market to the people in your setting.

Having a dedicated staff or volunteers is a key success factor for developing and managing your project, especially at the beginning.



Develop a project timeline. Allow ample time to complete each step of the project. Remember, things may take longer than expected. Consider when the season starts and what time will be convenient for both the customers and the vendor(s)/farmer(s).

Address any legal and policy considerations.

The type of agency or setting you represent will dictate whether any federal, state or local government regulations or ordinances are in effect. These could affect the vendor(s) selection, location, procurement procedures, or any contractual agreement with the vendor(s). Seek out the appropriate legal counsel or administrative input required by the unique characteristics of your setting.



The CDC Garden Market Toolkit Suggests the Following for a Federal Property Market⁶

- Follow a competitive bidding process to select a vendor, if required.
- Execute a legal contractual agreement between your company/agency and the vendor.
- Research existing policies or contracts regarding who has the legal or contractual right to sell food on your property. For example, federal agencies must comply with the Randolph-Sheppard Act.
- Research whether county or local ordinances require permits or zoning approval for market operation.
- Verify that liability insurance policies provide adequate coverage for your organization and the vendor.
- Verify that the vendor has the required business licenses (if applicable) and general liability insurance.

Select the farmers/vendors. Identify the appropriate produce farmer(s)/vendor(s) based on your project and timeline. Talk with the farmer(s)/vendor(s) about interest generated in the project and discuss whether this project meets their direct marketing needs.

- Develop a potential vendor list from available resources in your community. See the resources section on page 10 for state and national contacts.
- Interview potential vendors; get references; or visit their farm or other businesses they own, operate or participate in (e.g., weekend municipal farmers market participant, etc.).
- Consider product variety when soliciting farmers or vendors. For example, customers may not be happy if all vendors were only selling lettuces, or the market was saturated with too many watermelon vendors.
- Be flexible when determining the day of the week for your market. Avoid days and times that conflict or compete with other established markets in your area.

- Get to know the product.** The local, state and federal agencies responsible for oversight of different types of farm or processed products vary by location and sometimes by counties. For example, state food and drug ordinances require that homemade ice cream sold for profit must originate from an inspected kitchen specific to dairy products.
- Verify that vendors are certified and/or have USDA-graded products, when applicable. In some cases, small farms growing or raising a minimal amount of a product may be exempt from USDA grading.
 - If eggs, meats, honey, cheeses and other farm products are sold to complement the fruits and vegetables, check the required legal or voluntary farm/product inspection or certification. At a minimum, a vendor should be able to verify his or her compliance with voluntary industry guidance and good agricultural practices.

Determine the market or program structure. Have a clear understanding about items that will be sold and how the products will be delivered. Popular standards include: produce must be grown within a 75-mile radius and locally sourced when product is in season; signage must be posted indicating organic or locally grown; and non-edible farm products such as soaps, yarn, flowers, etc. are allowed or excluded.



- Work with management/leadership and vendor to develop a contract for services.
- Devise a clause or rule that gives you the option to terminate vendor participation based on your guidelines.
- Develop market rules, either formal or informal, to prevent misunderstandings, avoid questions of favoritism, promote quality assurance, and maintain acceptable business practices. A lot of examples of rules and contracts are available on the web. Rules, memorandums or contracts should be signed and kept by all parties and should contain clauses for changes as situational needs arise.
- Decide if any vendor fees are appropriate. Many on-site markets do not charge vendors a space fee for participation. The vendors are considered to be invited guests on the property specific to a predetermined time, event and purpose. On-site markets are often considered by organizers as a value-added benefit to the people at that setting. This eliminates the need for market incorporation or a fee structure.
- Determine payment options for customers. Examples include cash, checks, credit card, use of WIC or Senior Farmer's Market vouchers, and Electronic Benefits Transfer cards for the Secure Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Determine the location. Identify the best location for both customers and vendor(s).

Consider safety measures. Identify security issues and determine if additional planning or resources are needed for the vendor(s) and customers. Security for vendor(s) and customers is a high priority. These are some issues that should be considered regarding safety for a farmers market or produce market:

- Have well-defined maps and directions for emergency vehicle access.
- Make a list of nearby persons (and their contact information) certified in CPR, or the location of the nearest heart defibrillator.
- Keep a first aid kit on hand.
- Engage the local fire department well in advance to approve the exact market location, vendor parking and visitor access.

Determine logistics. Working as a team can ensure success. Your team should consider these issues and delegate the responsibilities appropriately.

- Ensure adequate shading for vendor(s) and customers.
- Provide access to electricity for vendors for electronic payment option or refrigeration needs.
- Locate available water access for the vendor(s) and customers.
- Use signs to inform shoppers and vendor(s) of the nearest bathroom facilities.
- Have well-established communication plans to inform shoppers and vendor(s) of cancellations due to severe weather (rain is not usually a reason to cancel, but a hurricane would be). Unless it is a one-time event, "rain dates" are not usually successful.
- Ensure that there is parking for loading and unloading produce. In most cases, it is not practical for farmers to transport their products beyond where they park.
- Make sure that good food safety and sanitation measures are followed by the vendor(s) and customers. Discuss whether on-site refrigerators or other storage arrangements are available for customers to use if their produce is perishable and will not be going home right away.
- Clarify roles of everyone involved.
- Determine the hours of operation and/or the pick up and delivery methods for CSA or produce delivery options. It makes sense to determine the market hours or delivery schedules based on the majority of customers' schedules.

Determine your criteria for success and develop an evaluation plan. It is important to evaluate the success of your project to improve it in the future and to let management/ leadership know how well the project does. Ideas include surveying customer and vendor satisfaction and keeping track how many people purchased items. You may also want to assess customers' before-and-after fruit and vegetable consumption. Many of the North Carolina and national resources listed in this document provide you with more ideas, tools and resources for evaluating your project.



Advertising and Communications

There are many ways to create excitement and business for your program. Be creative when planning how you will promote your new project.

- Identify your target audience. Decide who you want to come to your market or join your CSA and find out how they get information (e.g., newspapers, fliers, radio or word of mouth).
- Use effective ways to communicate your project (e.g., e-mails, posters, announcements, etc.). The planning team is likely the best source to generate excitement and attendance for your produce project.
- Invite your local media, organizational leaders and local dignitaries to a promotional event.
- Identify people responsible for each promotional activity.
- Develop a budget and timeline for communication activities.
- Develop promotional materials like fliers and posters letting people know about the project. Make sure they are in well-trafficked areas.
- Identify or develop educational resources such as recipes, healthy eating brochures, food safety materials, and handling and storage tips to complement the fruits and vegetables that will be sold (see page 10 for resources). For examples of posters promoting healthy eating, see www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com.
- Think fun, lots of color, and enthusiasm for promoting your program.

Program Kick-Off and Maintenance

Prepare a kick-off activity or celebration for the first day of your project and use lessons learned to make it even better the next time.

- Arrive early and help your vendor(s) set up (if applicable).
- Hand out or post educational materials.
- Bring extra supplies (paper and markers to make signs, staple guns or tape, boxes or bags to hold produce, etc.).
- If your venue is outdoors, be prepared for the weather.
- Arrange for a cooking demonstration or taste testing.
- Give door prizes or other incentives.
- Document your success along the way. This information will help in demonstrating your success and planning for the future
 - Take photos at your events.
 - Hand out short surveys to assess customer satisfaction and suggestions.
 - Find a way to record the number of people attending the kick-off and routinely document participation throughout the program.
 - Ask the vendor(s)/farmer(s) to track sales or report their satisfaction with sales as the program moves forward.
- Pull together your planning team, celebrate your successes, and make plans to continue to improve the program.

REFERENCES

1. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, NC State Center for Health Statistics & the NC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, NC Dept. of Public Instruction and NC Dept. of Health and Human Services.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *National Fruit and Vegetable Program Guidebook*, Draft 3.07.
3. Office of Environmental Education, NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, www.eenorthcarolina.org/.
4. Oxfam America, *Buy Local Food and Farm Toolkit—A Guide for Community Organizers*, www.oxfamamerica.org/resources/files/Food_and_Farm_Toolkit.pdf.
5. Truit, Trisha, *Why the “Local Multiplier Effect” Always Counts*. Grassroots Economic Organizing (GEO) Newsletter ©2004 GEO, P O Box 115, Riverdale MD 20738, www.geo.coop/LocalMultiplierEffect1104.htm.
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *CDC Garden Market Toolkit*, www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/gardenmarket/index.htm.

NC Successes

Duke Farmers Market Program

Duke University in Durham, North Carolina established its LIVE FOR LIFE® program as the institution's employee health promotion program. LIVE FOR LIFE® provides a variety of resources such as fitness programs, smoking-cessation assistance and health education to support employees' pursuit of healthy lifestyles. After a LIVE FOR LIFE® health risk assessment revealed that Duke employees did not get the daily recommended amount of fruits, vegetables and fiber, the University began hosting a farmers market between the hospital and the clinic. Since 2002, each Friday during the spring and every other Friday during the summer, staff, faculty, patients and students shop for local fruits, vegetables and other food items at the market. Between nine and twelve farmers sell produce and other goods to up to 600 shoppers. Duke was one of the first hospitals in the country to host a farmers market and has since inspired others to use their facilities to promote fruit and vegetable consumption through on-site markets.

For more information, contact:

LIVE FOR LIFE® at Duke
Phone: (919) 684-3136
lflprogm@mc.duke.edu
www.hr.duke.edu/farmersmarket/index.html



NC Church Lot Farmers Markets

The Rural Life Committee of the NC Council of Churches set up 14 new church parking lot or church-based tailgate farmers markets. Besides getting fresh and nutritious foods, surveys show that a major reason people go to these markets is the fellowship and community contact. The group made certain that low income households could use WIC and food stamp program benefits for the fresh food.

For more information, contact:

North Carolina Council of Churches
Phone: 919-828-6501
nccoafc@nccouncilofchurches.org

Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International Community Supported Agriculture

In 2002, RTI International, located in Research Triangle Park, teamed with the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (www.cefs.ncsu.edu) and the NC Cooperative Extension Service to organize and establish a Community Supported Agriculture program. In 2003, the program was turned over to an all volunteer staff of RTI International employees and the farms participating in the program. Once a week, on Thursday afternoons between 4 and 6 p.m., CSA members come to RTI and pick up their share(s) from the farmers. Although they encourage CSA memberships, many of the farmers bring "extras", allowing the RTI program to also offer a "mini farmers market." They have three vegetable farmers, one fruit farmer, one flower farmer, and one meat and egg farmer participating in the program. The program has enjoyed continual growth, making every year more successful than the previous.

For more information, contact:

Celia Eicheldinger (celia@rti.org)
or Erin Newton (eon@rti.org)
www.rti.org/csa

For how to set up a workplace CSA modeled after the RTI project, see:
www.cefs.ncsu.edu/rticsa.htm

Resources

The resources listed below are just a sampling of the many that are available. Please visit www.fruitsandveggiesnc.com for a more detailed list.

Farmers Markets

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service
www.ams.usda.gov

National Association of Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs
www.nafmnp.org

OpenAir Market Net: The World Wide Guide to Farmers' Markets, Street Markets, Flea Markets and Street Vendors
www.openair.org

Project for Public Spaces—Farmers Market Policy: An Inventory of Federal, State, and Local Examples
www.pps.org

The Farmers Market Project: Resources to connect to those interested in on-site farmers' markets
www.farmersmarketsusa.org

Worksite Farmers Markets

Kaiser Permanente Farmers' Market Resource Guide and Health Care Without Harm Coalition—Going Green: A Resource Kit for Pollution Prevention in Health Care—Farmers' Markets on Hospital Grounds
www.noharm.org

Other Produce Markets

CDC Garden Market Toolkit
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/gardenmarket/index.htm

Farmers Market Guidebook, Division of Marketing—North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
www.ncagr.com/markets/index.htm

Finding Farmers Markets and Farmers in NC

North Carolina Department of Agriculture
www.ncagr.com

NC Farm Fresh Program
www.ncfarmfresh.com

LocalHarvest
www.localharvest.org

North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association
www.nafdma.com



Community Supported Agriculture

United States Department of Agriculture, National Agriculture Library, Alternative Farming Systems Information Center
www.nal.usda.gov

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
www.sare.org/csa/index.htm

Center for Environmental Farming Systems, NC State & A&T Universities—Workplace Community Supported Agriculture: Connecting Local Farms to Local Employers
www.cefs.ncsu.edu

Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Resources

NC Fruits and Veggies Nutrition Coalition
www.FruitsAndVeggiesNC.com

Eat Smart Move More NC Consumer Information
www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com

Eat Smart Move More NC Programs and Resources
www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com

Produce for Better Health Foundation—Fruits & Veggies—More Matters™ Consumer Website
www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Fruit and Vegetable Program
www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

Additional Resources

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (Western North Carolina Local Food Guide)
www.buyappalachian.org

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
www.carolinafarmstewards.org

The Community Food Security Coalition
www.foodsecurity.org

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation—Food Systems and Rural Development
www.wkkf.org

Agricultural law publications, public policy and guides from Drake University Law School
law.drake.edu

Farm-to-Fork Meat Buying Clubs
www.ncchoices.com

Eating Locally Grown/Raised Foods (the Slow Food Movement)

Slow Food Asheville: www.slowfoodasheville.org

Slow Food Charlotte: www.slowfoodcharlotte.org

Slow Food Piedmont: www.slowfoodpiedmont.org

Slow Food Research Triangle: www.slowfoodtriangle.org

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Project Partners



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www.cefs.ncsu.edu



Endorsed by the North Carolina Fruits & Veggies Nutrition Coalition, a multi-partner alliance whose mission is to promote better health of North Carolinians by increasing fruit and vegetable consumption.
www.FruitsAndVeggiesNC.com

www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com

