Webinar

Expanding Food Access While Maximizing Social & Economic Impact: A Briefing on UpLift Solutions

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Expanding Food Access While Maximizing Social & Economic Impact: A Briefing on UpLift Solutions

Delivering Entrepreneurial Solutions that Support Underserved Communities for the Joy of a Healthy Life
The Problem

- 24.6 Million Americans (8% of the US Population) in Food Deserts
- More Obese and Less Healthy
- Other Community Challenges Including:
  - Higher school drop out rate
  - Teen pregnancy
  - Violence
  - High unemployment
  - Inadequate primary education
  - Incarceration/Re-entry challenges
  - Lack of access to healthcare/higher incidence of illness

- Grocery stores in food deserts generally have higher operating costs and lower margins.

**An Average Grocery Store:**

0% loss + 1% gain = 1% profit

**A Food Desert Grocery Store:**

4% loss + absence of 1% gain = 5% gap in profitability

- Causes of Grocer’s Gap

- Grocery store operators often try to fill the gap with higher pricing, lower wages, or reduced quality and standards, but these methods are ineffective and often result in supermarket failure.
A Solution: Sustainable Innovative Supermarkets

**Economic Benefits:**
- Job opportunities
- Revitalized neighborhood housing markets
- Local tax revenues
- Workforce training and development
- Access to banking and financial education
- New business surrounding the store
- Additional spending in the local economy

**Health Benefits:**
- Lower rates of heart disease
- Access to health clinics
- Lower rates of diabetes
- Access to health education
- Fewer obese children and adults
- More physically active children
Case Study: Brown’s Super Stores

• Brown’s Super Stores Mission: “Bringing Joy To The Lives Of The People We Serve”
• 11 Successful Inner-City Supermarkets
• PA Fresh Food Financing Initiative

Why UpLift Solutions?
Bringing the Model to Scale: UpLift’s Work

**Sustainable Food Systems**
- Supermarket Development
- Technical Assistance on Store Financing
  - New Markets Tax Credits
  - Other Public Incentives
  - Local Tax Abatement Programs
  - CDFI Flexible Financing
- Healthy Food Access Fund, a Community Development Enterprise (CDE)
- TA for CDFIs on Healthy Food Lending
- Innovative Business/Operating Strategies for Grocery Operators

**Community Development**
- Community Outreach
- Workforce Development and Training Programs
- Development of Affordable In-Store Financial Institutions
- Anti-Violence Efforts
- Urban Gardening Programs

**Health Innovations**
- In-Store Health Clinic Development
- Health and Nutrition Education
- In-Store Nutritionist Services
- Application Assistance for Public Benefits
- Merchandising Research to Promote Healthy Eating
How Can We Bring this Model to Scale?

- **Opportunity:** There is high need for UpLift’s Technical Assistance services from nonprofits, CDFI’s, and government.

- **Challenge:** These players are often not able to pay for the cost of these services without a long development process that inhibits progress on the project.

- **Solution:** Grant funding for a national program to provide pre-funded **technical assistance** to allow initiatives to move forward in a timely and efficient manner.
How Can We Bring this Model to Scale?

• **Opportunity:** Workforce development of ex-offenders and structurally unemployed has proven effects on job security and upward mobility

• **Challenge:** In the current system, these populations are left out of workforce development efforts

• **Solutions:**
  • Advocate for policy solutions to promote a *system that includes the structurally unemployed in workforce development* for food industry jobs
  • Grant funding to *establish food retail training centers in partnership with new healthy financing initiatives* to fill new hard to fill jobs with local, difficult to employ populations
How Can We Bring this Model to Scale?

• **Opportunity:** With health care reform, low access communities will have greater access to health insurance but limited health care choices. No prominent convenient care provider serves this population.

• **Challenge:** Convenient care clinics provide an additional access point in these low wealth communities but often lose money in the first two-three years of operation.

• **Solution:** Grant funding and investment opportunity to establish health clinics in supermarkets in low income and medically underserved communities in partnership with local health care systems.
How Can We Bring this Model to Scale?

- **Opportunity:** Healthy food projects have a good ROI for society because they result in economic development and disease reduction by focusing on prevention rather than treatment.

- **Challenge:** There is a lack of capacity for national CDFIs to execute this healthy food access work.

- **Solution:** Brainstorm with UpLift Solutions about developing new investment products, including equity financing, and creating a national CDFI to provide flexible capital combined with expert technical assistance nationally.
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Contact Information:
Jeff Brown, Chairman Jeffrey.Brown@wakefern.com
Donna Leuchten, Director of Sustainable Food Systems Donna.Leuchten@UpLiftSolutions.org

Office: (856) 471-2035
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