

THE TWIN CITIES MOBILE MARKET



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Twin Cities Mobile Market?

The Twin Cities Mobile Market is a nonprofit grocery store on wheels that brings fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods to “food deserts” and other underserved communities. Our goal is to make healthy food more affordable for those with limited incomes.

What are “Food Deserts”?

Food deserts are areas with a shortage of supermarkets and an overpopulation of convenience stores and liquor stores. As a result, many people are not able to access fresh fruits, vegetables, and other food needed for a healthy diet. In the Twin Cities, the two largest food deserts are North Minneapolis and the East Side of St. Paul – areas with extremely high rates of poverty. People living in these neighborhoods are already at higher risk for obesity and diabetes; living in a food desert makes these problems worse.



How Does This Model Work?

The Twin Cities Mobile Market works through community partners, local farmers, and other food suppliers to purchase food at wholesale, bulk prices. Because we are a nonprofit social enterprise, we mark up our prices just enough to cover our basic operational costs, which are lower than those of a stand-alone grocery store. As a result, we are able to offer food at or below market rates. We will also accept EBT and WIC.

Do People in These Neighborhoods Want to Eat Healthy Food?

Yes! A recent Twin Cities study showed that most food desert residents desired quality fruits and vegetables but struggled in accessing or affording them. The results of this study are echoed by a significant body of research conducted in low-income neighborhoods across the U.S. That said, we know we have to empower people with knowledge and skills needed to change their diets. We will provide nutrition education, including cooking demonstrations and meal kits to help people improve their lifestyles.

Why Invest in the Twin Cities Mobile Market?

The Twin Cities Mobile Market will strengthen communities on multiple levels:

- **Increase Social Justice:** Everyone – regardless of socioeconomic status – will have access to fruits, vegetables, lean meats, and other items needed to prepare a healthy meal.
- **Improve Health:** A healthy diet is directly linked to a decreased incidence of the leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes.
- **Reduce Healthcare Costs:** Healthier diets could prevent at least \$71 billion per year in medical costs. State and federal governments spend one thousand times more to treat disease than to prevent it (\$1,390 vs. \$1.21 per person each year).

- **Improve Education Outcomes:** One in six children now suffers from a disability that affects their behavior, memory, or ability to learn. Research shows that what a child eats positively or negatively impacts behavior and learning ability.

How Do You Know This Model Works?

We researched other mobile markets across the U.S. As a result, we have developed our model based on best practices. We also have a community of other mobile markets across the U.S. to access for ongoing support.

Where Will the Mobile Market Operate?

We will go to locations in our targeted neighborhoods that provide a critical mass of potential customers with the most need, including public housing hi-rises, senior buildings, community centers, and churches. We will secure signatures from at least 50 people indicating their interest in shopping at the mobile market before making it a regular, weekly site.

When Will the Mobile Market Operate?

The Twin Cities Mobile Market will operate at least five days per week, stopping at multiple locations each day. We will go to each site on the same day, at the same time, each week so we can cultivate a regular customer base while meeting our mission.

How Will You Promote the Mobile Market?

As part of our process in establishing a mobile market site, we will survey residents in the area to learn what types of foods they would want us to carry, what their current fruit and vegetable intake is, and what days and times would be best for the mobile market to operate in their area. This process will provide a baseline for measuring our impact and it will help promote the mobile market. We will also develop partnerships with community leaders, faith leaders, building managers, schools, and other community organizations to promote the mobile market to their clients using their existing communication channels.

What Are Your Plans for Growth?

We plan to launch on St. Paul's East Side in August 2013 and expand to North Minneapolis by the end of 2013. Our vision is to have a mobile market meeting the demand in every underserved, Twin Cities neighborhood.

How Do I Get Involved?

There are many ways to help out the Twin Cities Mobile Market. Examples include:

- Serve on our advisory board
- Volunteer to survey potential customers
- Connect us with local community leaders
- Volunteer to help operate the market
- And more!

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