

Tips for enrolling participants in the Healthy Options program

The toolkit for this program was developed by the Prevention Research Center at the University of Iowa, with Faryle Nothwehr, PhD, MPH as the Principal Investigator. Local health departments and/or other community groups may use the materials as they wish, with no reporting requirement. However, we are naturally curious about the number of communities and restaurants this program will reach, and would greatly appreciate it if you would let us know that you are using the toolkit. We would also certainly appreciate suggestions for improvement. You may contact either Dr. Nothwehr (faryle-nothwehr@uiowa.edu) or Heidi Haines (heidi-haines@uiowa.edu).

When approaching restaurant owners about the program:

- Be aware that most owner-operated restaurants have a very small profit margin, so owners may be reluctant to change anything, for fear of losing customers. They may want to think about it before agreeing to participate. Provide them with the brochure in this toolkit, and *your contact information*.
- Although the program was tested in rural restaurants, it could be used in any owner-operated restaurant. The responses from customers might vary due to differences in customer characteristics like age, income, or education.
- Be sure to emphasize that the program is flexible; it can be adapted to fit their current menu.
- The program does NOT require them to change their menu or do anything differently, it is a way for them to better advertise the healthy options that they already offer. Some owners do choose to begin offering more healthy options once they decide to participate.
- The program is very low cost and simple to implement, the only thing you need is the table signs.
- Note that customers want to know that healthy options are available, and people are becoming more health conscious.

Materials: (see templates for window signs and table signs in this toolkit) Costs will be your responsibility, not IDPH or the University of Iowa. Some owners may be willing to contribute to these costs. Once table signs are created using the template, they need to be printed out and cut to fit inside plastic table sign holders (two sided). Note that you can change the color of the print to match the preference of the owners, but dark print on white paper shows up best. The template includes the most popular options used by

restaurants that have participated in the program, but these may be tailored to each restaurant you work with. Please keep the program logo on the materials.

- Clear plastic table sign *holders* that are 4" x 6" may be purchased from Displays2Go <http://www.displays2go.com/Product.aspx?ID=528> and cost less than \$2.00 apiece (price varies by volume ordered).
- Window signs are an 18 X 24 laminated poster and can be ordered online at FedEx Office <http://www.fedex.com/us/office/poster-printing.html>. Prices start at \$22.00 depending on type of paper and finish. This is an *optional* item.
- Note that both these products may be found elsewhere.
- Restaurant owners can keep the signs and use them as long as they want to. You may also give them the electronic template to use and change as desired.

Program Evaluation Suggestions:

- After the table signs have been created, check to see that they have been placed on the tables.
- Deliver the press release to the local newspaper if desired by the owner (see template). Check within 2-3 weeks to see whether this has been published and remind the newspaper about the story if needed. Also, highlight the owner's participation in the program in any newsletters or other media your organization may have.
- Approximately 1, 3, and 12 months after sign placement:
 - Ask the owner if the signs are still in place, and if not, why not.
 - Ask what kinds of reactions they have had from customers.
 - Ask if they have made any healthy changes to their offerings as a result of participating in the program (since the last time you asked).
- Document your evaluation findings for future reference and so that you can be prepared to respond to questions from other stakeholders or community members.

