



Community Owned Cooperative Grocery Stores

Addressing the Food Insecurity

Presentation to the Senate Study Committee on Improving Access to Healthy Foods and Ending Food Deserts

Senate Resolution 283

October 6, 2021

About Us



- **Vision:** To be a sustainable community owned grocery store supporting the financial and healthy well-being of our neighborhood
- **Area of Focus:** SW Metro Atlanta
- **Our values:**
 - Honesty
 - Openness
 - Equity
 - Social Responsibility
 - Environmental Stewardship
 - Democracy
 - Caring for Community





What is a co-op grocery store and how is it different?

- A co-op is **owned and controlled by the people** who shop there. Each community shareholder gets to vote on decisions made by the store, so it's democratically controlled.
- Store **profits stay in the community** and can be given back to shareholders.
- Co-ops **create their own food systems** by choosing who they purchase from, where those items come from, and the standards they must meet.
- Co-ops **stimulate their local economy** by providing fair wages and purchasing from local farmers and businesses.
- Grocery stores **increase foot traffic** and help revitalize an area as an anchor business.



So much more than a grocery store

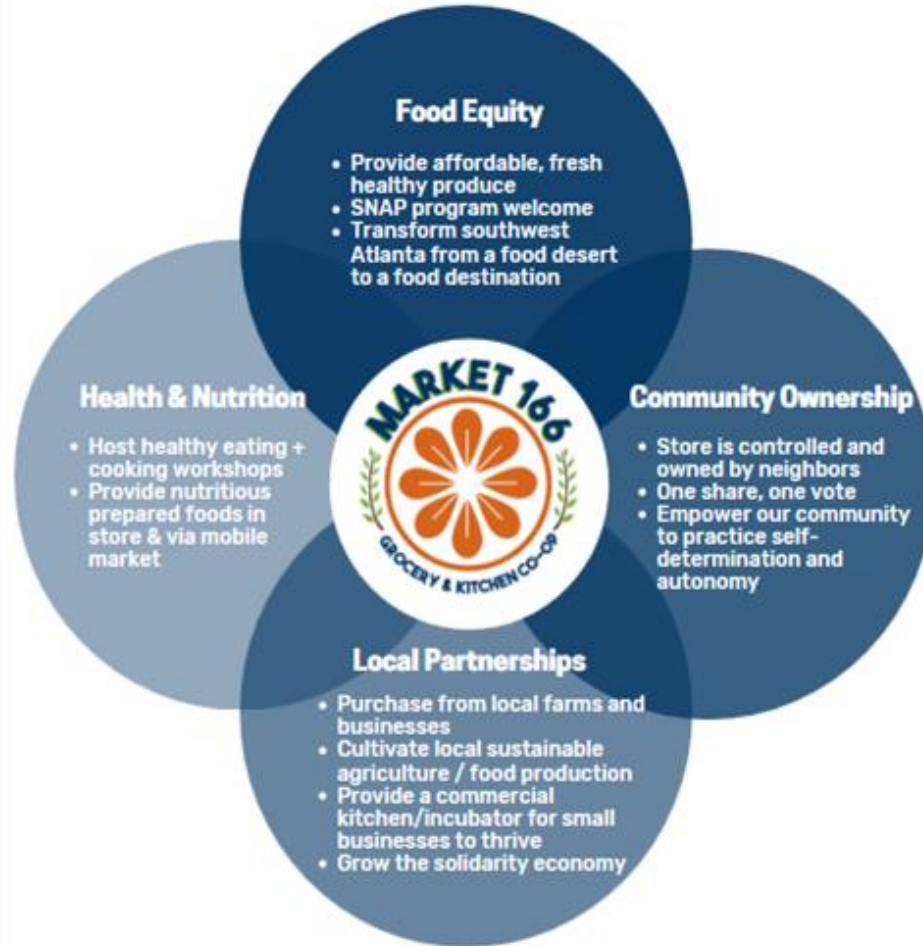


Empowering our community to address food equity by developing a program to:

- Provide access to **affordable quality** local fresh food.
- Change our neighborhood from a Food desert ⇒ to a **Food Destination**.
- Use a **Mobile Market** to get food and **nutrient dense prepared foods** to those who are most in need. Pop-up markets and a mobile market can adapt location and routes quickly to changing needs.
- Provide commercial kitchen space to **incubate local small businesses** who create healthy food products.
- Conduct workshops to **demonstrate quick healthy meal preparation**.
- Create a space where **community gathers, learns, procures, prepares, and enjoys food together**.
- **Supporting local farmers** and ensuring their produce has a market that reaches the community.



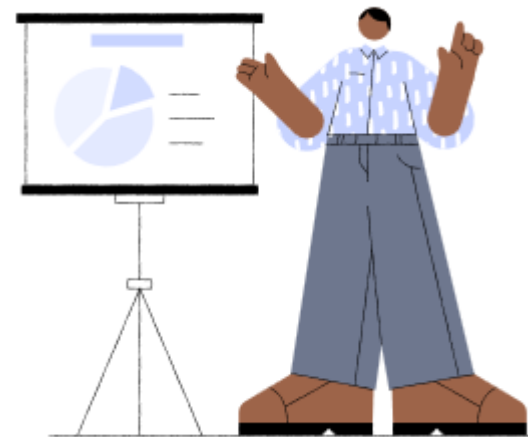
Market 166 is central to our food system





Recommendations to support grocery stores in food deserts

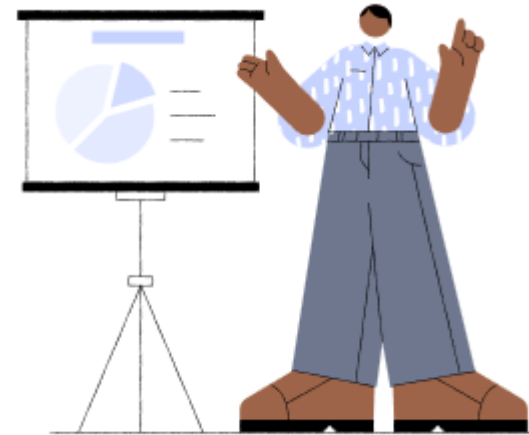
- Make it easier for Mobile Markets to accept SNAP and double benefits.
- Encourage nutrient dense prepared foods to be purchased with food assistance programs.
- Incentivize programs that connect GA farmers to coop grocery stores.
- Advocate for special tax breaks for cooperatives.
- Support federal efforts to level the playing field for cooperatives to access special financing that does not require personal guarantees for loans as stated in S.1736 - “Capital for Cooperatives Act”.





Recommendations to support grocery stores in food deserts

- Update Georgia law to include cooperative laws on the books that go beyond agriculture, electricity, telephone, insurance, and credit unions (see Georgia Cooperative Development Center for more information).
- Increase start-up funds for grocery stores in areas that reduce food insecurity.
- Knowing that grocery stores have a slim profit margin, there should be continued support in grants for cooperative grocery stores that operate in food deserts proportional to the percentage of low-income customers they serve.





“Because everyone deserves fresh, healthy, local food”

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