

## **Assessing the Early Stage Acceptability of Good Bowls Among Corner Store Customers in Warren County, NC**

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**Background:** To sustainably resolve health disparities in low-income communities by addressing food insecurity and promoting economic opportunities, Good Bowls, LLC has developed frozen meals produced through partnerships with small businesses. Good Bowls are sold using a cost-offset model in which products are sold at a higher price at higher-end stores and at a lower price at corner stores. We assessed the early acceptability of Good Bowls among corner store customers in Warren County to tailor Good Bowls' entry into this market and ensure that Good Bowls can achieve its intervention goals.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study design was used. Two surveys were administered at four corner stores located in Warren County, North Carolina: 1) a corner store intercept survey designed to learn more about the perceived availability of healthy food, the barriers that customers experience when maintaining healthy diets, the food shopping and consumption patterns of customers, and the acceptability of Good Bowls; and 2) a taste test survey designed to test the reception of Good Bowls flavors.

**Findings:** We found that a substantial proportion of survey respondents faced significant barriers to accessing healthy food, with 42% of participants identified as food insecure. Barriers to healthy eating included cost, availability of food, and convenience, and corner stores are a significant source of food for their customers.

**Conclusions:** The findings confirmed the existence of barriers to obtaining healthy foods that Good Bowls seeks to address, the validity of corner stores as a point of intervention, and the positive reception of Good Bowls among corner store customers.