

**Healthy Eating Research (HER)-Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation
Network (NOPREN) Healthy Food Retail Working Group
Proposed
Grocery Retailer Academic Collaborative (GRAC) Guidelines
February 27, 2017**

The **Grocery Retailer Academic Collaborative** known as “GRAC” will facilitate collaborations between retailers, academic researchers, and evaluation scientists who wish to engage in mutually beneficial relationships related to Healthy Food Retail Research^{1,2}. GRAC aims to engage academic researchers and evaluation scientists with grocery retailers that serve a diverse range of geographic, demographic, economic, and ethnic populations across the United States particularly nutritionally vulnerable populations—e.g., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program participants to:

1. Serve as a resource to understand shoppers and public policy impacts on retailer business.
2. Increase the quality and quantity of Healthy Food Retail Research projects within grocery stores and emerging retail formats (e.g., online retail).
3. Engage in healthy food retail research projects to increase purchases that are economically sustainable for the retailer, budget neutral for shoppers, increase positive community relations for grocery stores and provide for potential long-term sustainability.
4. Contingent upon funding from a host organization, organize conferences to share research and evaluation results as well as provide retailers and academics a forum to discuss challenges and opportunities for Healthy Food Retail Research.

Proposed GRAC Research or Evaluation Research Project Management Arrangements

GRAC will facilitate connecting academic researchers and evaluation scientists who desire to pursue research projects with retail partners who have similar interests or establishments that may serve as a research project site. Final financial and implementation agreements will take place between the academic researcher’s or evaluation scientist’s institution, the funder, and the retailer.

¹ The Healthy Food Retail Working Group is a collaborative effort of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Healthy Eating Research (HER) program and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation Network (NOPREN). A focus of The Healthy Food Retail-Retailer Subgroup is working with retailers and reaching consumers. Co-chairs of this subgroup and authors of this document are Collin Payne, New Mexico State University and Barbara Baquero, University of Iowa. <http://nopren.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Healthy-Food-Retail-WG.pdf>

² The findings and views of the research entities are solely their own and do not reflect the official position or views of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, HER, CDC or DHHS.

Academic Researcher/Evaluation Scientist Partners:³

While specific research project details will need to be negotiated between academic researchers or evaluation scientists and retail partners, initial pairing with a retailer requires written description of the following:

- A. The proposed novel research idea and an estimate of the research timeline
- B. The proposed method used to test the novel research idea and research project term
- C. The research project dissemination plan to researcher/scientist community and potential public relations activity with retailer
- D. Sustainability plan of research beyond term of research project
- E. Statement of intent regarding retailer profit neutrality or enhancement and shopper budget neutrality of research project idea
- F. Statement of compliance with retailer's individual store or corporate policies identified to be pertinent to collaboration (e.g., data disclosure)
- G. (If applicable) Statement of reasonable researcher/scientist maintenance of in-store changes during collaboration term
- H. Statement of no-cost to retailer regarding proposed research project
- I. Benefit to the retailer for participating in the research project
- J. Statement of data sharing and data use agreement (e.g., data disclosure and ownership).

Retail Partners:

Retail partners may or may not be able, willing, or interested in accommodating academic researcher/evaluation scientist partners in all of the subsequent considerations. To understand, however, the operating principles of any potential academic researcher/evaluation scientist and retailer pairings, GRAC intends to collect information on all of the following considerations:

- A. The number of researchers or research projects that the retailer feels comfortable accommodating
- B. Two to three areas in which the researcher could help retailer in business practices (as part of or separate from any research project)
- C. Public relations opportunities in the communities in which GRAC research projects occur
- D. The point-person for whom an academic GRAC partner can rely regarding the initiation, maintenance, public relations, and conference components of the collaboration
- E. Acceptable data sharing and data use policy including safeguards for data disclosure and ownership
- F. Flexibility regarding potential retailer changes to different departments within a store, across multiple stores, or the entire chain including, but not limited to price, product placement, product type, and promotion inside or outside the store

³ All research and evaluation studies should contact the respective state SNAP and/or WIC program as part of their research protocol to: (1) make sure proposed research was not overlooking any requirements for those programs (2) and as a simple courtesy to make sure the state program is aware of what is going on in their state.

- G. Academic researcher/evaluation scientist collaboration with retailers' shoppers (e.g., survey data collection), managers (e.g., store managers), and corporate management (e.g., Chief Information Officer; Chief Produce Manager)
- H. Time periods in which research projects remain in stores
- I. Long-term deployment possibility of research projects in stores if ideas are beneficial to retailer (i.e., research project will last beyond any individual store manager)
- J. (If available) Purchase and demographic information related to SNAP, WIC, and lower-income shoppers
- K. Retailer adherence to academic/evaluation scientist manuscript embargo policies