



Fresh Bucks Retail Partner Application Guidelines

Supermarkets and Grocery Stores

March 2021

City of Seattle

Table of Contents

I. Background and Introduction	2
II. Eligibility Requirements and Selection Process for Supermarkets and Grocery Stores	3
III. Timeline and Information Sessions	4
IV. E-Benefit Technology and Costs for Selected Retailers	5
V. Requirements for Selected Retailers	8
VI. Selection Criteria and Scoring Rubric	9

APPENDICES

[Appendix A](#): Race and Social Equity Index High Priority Areas

[Appendix B](#): Example Scope of Work

Application – Due Wednesday, April 28, 2021

The application with submission instructions is [available here](#) and due on **April 28 by 11:59 p.m.** Interested retailers are encouraged to review this document before submitting an application.

Questions?

If you have any questions about Fresh Bucks or the selection process, please email Alyssa Patrick at FreshBucksRetail@seattle.gov or call 206-256-5501.



I. Background and Introduction

Fresh Bucks is a Seattle-based healthy food program operated by the City of Seattle Office of Sustainability & Environment that helps families and individuals stretch their food budget. As of January 2021, nearly 12,000 households are enrolled in the Fresh Bucks voucher program, receiving \$40 a month to purchase fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets, farm stands, and grocery store partners.

Fresh Bucks aims to eliminate racial disparities in access to healthy foods for low-income Latinx, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN), Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (NHPI) communities and immigrants and refugees, particularly those with language barriers, through focused enrollment into the Fresh Bucks vouchers program. In 2020, 70% of Fresh Bucks vouchers enrollees were from these priority populations. As we expand our retail partnerships, Fresh Bucks seeks to work with retail partners who create store environments that are welcoming to all cultures, races, and languages, and provide consistent, quality fresh produce in neighborhoods where priority populations live and work.

Transitioning to an E-Benefit and Expanding Retail Network

In 2021, Fresh Bucks is shifting from a paper voucher to an e-benefit system, making it easier for both customers and retail partners to use Fresh Bucks benefits. Fresh Bucks customers will receive their monthly benefit on a card and/or app to use at participating retailers. **To accept Fresh Bucks, partnering retailers will either need to integrate the e-benefit system into their existing Point of Sale (POS) systems or use a stand-alone solution** (i.e. a tablet that operates separately from the POS and that is equipped with the Fresh Bucks e-benefits processing app - see [Section IV](#), Table 2 for more details).

As we shift to this new system, the City is also expanding the Fresh Bucks retail network. A primary goal of this expansion is to increase customer choice and access to high-quality produce by partnering with larger retailers (supermarkets/grocery store chains) that are committed to providing a wide selection of produce, are accessible in priority neighborhoods and via public transit, and are preferred by Fresh Bucks customers. **The selection process outlined in this document is focused on large retailers that have these key characteristics**, but we also seek to increase the number of small food retailers that accept Fresh Bucks. [Visit our website](#) to learn more about the selection process for small food retailers.



II. Eligibility Requirements and Selection Process for Supermarkets and Grocery Stores

Based on our recent survey of Fresh Bucks customers and national data on SNAP usage, we know that supermarkets, grocery store chains, and independently owned franchises are important food access points for Fresh Bucks eligible customers. For the purposes of this opportunity, we are defining supermarkets and grocery stores as establishments that primarily sell grocery products such as fruits, vegetables, meat, seafood, dry groceries, and dairy products. They also have one or more service departments (bakery, butcher, garden, etc.) and may sell household supplies, sundries, and other products. This includes but is not limited to supermarkets, large-, mid-, or small-scale retail grocery establishments, and individual franchise stores.

Eligibility Requirements and Selection Criteria

To be eligible, stores must meet the following requirements:

- Retailer's annual net revenue exceeds \$2 million as reported in general business and occupation (B&O) taxes to the City of Seattle's Finance and Administrative Services Department.
- Retailer consistently maintains an inventory of at least 25 types of fresh produce¹.
- Retailer has a valid City of Seattle business license.
- Retailer has a Taxpayer Identification Number and can submit an IRS W-9 form upon request.

In 2021, the Fresh Bucks team will select **up to three supermarket/grocery store retail partners** through the application process. A panel of City staff and community partners will review and score applications using criteria focused on accessibility and customer preference, produce selection, and fair labor and community engagement practices. A full list of criteria and scoring is available in [Section VI](#). We will prioritize stores that:

- serve households in the City's Race and Social Equity Index priority areas²,
- are accessible by public transportation,
- create welcoming environments for lower income, limited English proficiency customers, and
- serve a broad variety of fresh, quality produce.

Selected Retailers

Retailers selected through this process must also agree to requirements outlined in [Section V](#), which includes negotiating technology integration costs with the e-benefit vendor Solutran. The onboarding timeline for selected small food retailers will vary based on level of assistance needed and the contracting and technology integration processes. We aim to have the e-benefit system live in newly

¹ By *types of produce*, we are looking for produce items that are distinct from each other rather than varieties within one type. For example, apples count as one type even if the store provides multiple varieties of apples. Common groupings of produce, such as citrus, melons, berries and leafy greens will each count as one type as well.

² The [Race and Social Equity Index](#) was developed by the City's Office of Planning and Community Development. Using data such as poverty, race, and community health indicators at the census tract level, the index shows neighborhoods where a high proportion of residents are low income and impacted by health and other racial disparities. See [Appendix A](#) for the map.



selected stores in 2021-2022. Retailers not selected this year will be notified and we will retain your contact information for future selection processes.

III. Timeline and Information Sessions

The following provides an overview of the selection timeline, where to submit applications, and registration for the information session.

Table 1: Timeline

Activity	Dates
<p>Application released</p> <p>The application is available on the Fresh Bucks website. All materials must be submitted through the online form. This includes responses to narrative questions and a produce list outlined in the application overview document posted on the website.</p>	<p>Wednesday, March 31, 2021</p>
<p>Virtual information session</p> <p>The information session is an opportunity for retailers to ask questions about Fresh Bucks and the selection process. More information and registration link is below.</p>	<p>Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.</p>
<p>Application due</p>	<p>Wednesday, April 28, 2021 by 11:59 p.m. PST</p>
<p>Application review and scoring</p> <p>A panel of City staff and community partners will review and score applications based on criteria laid out in section VI.</p>	<p>May 2021</p>
<p>Retailers selected and notified</p> <p>Selected stores will be notified about selection in the summer. Stores that are not selected in 2021 will be kept on a list and updated about future selection processes.</p>	<p>June - July 2021</p>
<p>Partner onboarding</p> <p>The onboarding process includes identifying technology integration needs, negotiating, and signing a contract, and training store staff.</p>	<p>Onboarding is anticipated to begin in fall of 2021. Timelines will vary by store based on level of assistance needed, the contracting process, and staff capacity.</p>



Information Sessions

Interested retailers are encouraged to participate in an information session offered by Fresh Bucks staff. It is an opportunity for retailers to ask questions and hear an overview of the retail partner opportunity and selection process.

The session will take place virtually, with the option to join online or via phone. Language interpretation and other accommodations are available upon request. Retailers are encouraged to register using the link below at least a week prior to the event to allow time to arrange necessary accommodations.

Session Date and Registration

Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. | [Please register here](#) by April 8, 2021 if you need accommodations.

IV. E-Benefit Technology and Costs for Selected Retailers

The following is an overview of the e-benefit technology options and associated costs, as well as other costs required to be a participating Fresh Bucks retailer. This section will only apply for selected retailers.

E-Benefit Technology Integration or Stand-Alone Option

To accept Fresh Bucks benefits, retailers will need to work with the e-benefit vendor, Solutran, to set up the necessary technology. Access to the e-benefit system is required to process Fresh Bucks and will happen in one of the following three ways depending on the store's Point of Sale (POS) system and preferences:

1. **Solutran-Integrated POS System:** Companies that already participate in the Solutran S3 Retailer Network or use one of the following Solutran-integrated POS systems can deploy the Fresh Bucks e-benefit with minimal POS system configuration. Solutran-integrated POS systems include: ACE, ISS45, StoreLine, NCR 7.0, and SMS LOC.
2. **Non-Integrated POS System.** Stores that do not use a Solutran-integrated POS system will need to work with Solutran to configure their POS system to accept Fresh Bucks e-benefits. The retailer will need to take on costs needed to integrate, and this process may impact overall timeline for onboarding. Retailers may alternatively choose to use option 3, the tablet/mobile-based processing app (stand-alone solution).
3. **Mobile-Based Processing App:** Solutran is configuring a Fresh Bucks processing app that retailers can use to process the e-benefit on a stand-alone tablet or mobile device. This option requires no integration or configuration of the retailer's existing POS system and cash registers. It requires the store to have access to Wi-Fi or a mobile connection to run the app.

Below is more information about costs associated with each option and assistance provided by the City. Most of the costs included below will vary based on the store's technology needs and will be negotiated with Solutran as part of the onboarding process.



Table 2: E-Benefit Costs & Assistance

E-Benefit Technology	Technology Integration Costs to Retailer	Assistance Available
Option 1: Solutran-Integrated POS System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any costs associated with Solutran S3 network participation AND/OR Any costs associated with configuring Fresh Bucks e-benefits into the POS system, AND Any license or transaction costs incurred to process Fresh Bucks e-benefits, to be negotiated directly with Solutran. 	City of Seattle staff will onboard and provide staff training to prepare store staff to process Fresh Bucks e-benefits and assist customers with transactions. City staff will also serve as liaisons to connect retailers to Solutran for POS system integration and adjustments as needed.
Option 2: Non-Integrated POS System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any costs associated with integrating a store’s POS system to accept Fresh Bucks e-benefits to be negotiated directly with Solutran, AND; Any license or transaction costs incurred to process Fresh Bucks e-benefits, to be negotiated directly with Solutran. 	
Option 3: Mobile-Based Processing App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$100-\$1,000+ annual license fee dependent on number of unique users per license \$0.15/transaction Wi-Fi and Wi-Fi-enabled tablet and/or mobile device for each checkout stand. 	

Other Costs for Participating Retailers

In addition to technology-related costs, selected retailers will also be responsible for the costs of providing staff with training in cultural competency, racial equity, and/or race and social justice and printing Fresh Bucks marketing materials. Below is more information about these costs, which are also included in the requirements for selected retailers in the next section.

Staff Training

An important part of ensuring that Fresh Bucks customers have a welcome, positive shopping experience at participating retailers is fostering cultural competency among store staff. For that reason, participating retailers are required to provide annual staff and leadership training in cultural competency, racial equity, and/or race and social justice. Stores may choose their own training to meet this requirement or the City can connect them with training recommendations. The costs will vary depending on training selected.



Promotional Materials

Participating retailers should promote the opportunity to use Fresh Bucks in their stores to retailers. The City will provide print-ready files for printed posters, handouts, or other materials to be displayed in store. The retailer is responsible for costs associated with adjusting and printing the materials. Any material that uses the Fresh Bucks logo must be developed in partnership with and approved by the City of Seattle. Costs will vary depending on outreach approach.

V. Requirements for Selected Retailers

Selected retail partners will be required to contract with both the City of Seattle and the e-benefit vendor to accept and receive reimbursement for Fresh Bucks customer spending. A sample scope of work is attached in [Appendix B](#), and an overview of selected retailer requirements is summarized below. Retailers selected through this process must also agree to standard City requirements that will be formerly outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) negotiated during the onboarding process. Once retail partners are selected, our goal is to continue contracts with retailers that meet annual renewal criteria to maintain familiar access points for Fresh Bucks customers year over year.

Retailers must meet the following requirements:

- Cover costs associated with integrating with the e-benefit vendor's POS systems or setting up the tablet/mobile-based processing app (most costs will be negotiated with the e-benefit vendor as noted in table 2).
- Provide the City and e-benefit vendor with Taxpayer Identification Number, an IRS W-9 form and insurance information upon request, as well as any other documentation the e-benefit vendor requires to set up reimbursement.
- Actively work to create a welcoming and positive shopping experience for customers using Fresh Bucks, including friendly and knowledgeable cashier staff, multilingual signage as needed, and timely resolution and follow-up to challenges raised by customers.
- Use Fresh Bucks brand, logo, and marketing material. Any material that uses the Fresh Bucks logo must be developed in partnership with and approved by the City of Seattle. Retail partner will assume applicable development and printing costs.
- Ensure store managers and frontline staff receive initial and refresher training on processing the e-benefit and helping customers use the e-benefit. This includes a plan to train new staff so that turnover does not impact Fresh Bucks customers.
- Provide annual staff and leadership training in cultural competency, racial equity, and/or race and social justice to inform how store staff and leadership interact with Fresh Bucks customers. Stores may choose their own training to meet this requirement or the City can connect them with training recommendations.
- Monitor Fresh Bucks transactions to ensure adherence to item eligibility policy and all applicable program rules.
- Inform City of Seattle of issues that arise in a timely manner to allow for program improvements.
- Share Fresh Bucks transaction data with City of Seattle.



- Follow the City of Seattle’s Social Equity Requirements, which prohibit discrimination against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identify, political ideology, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, honorably discharged veteran or military status, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical handicap.

As part of this agreement, **City of Seattle** will provide:

- Orientation, ongoing training material, and train-the-trainer session for store staff about processing the e-benefit and helping customers with their transactions.
- Designed marketing materials for stores to print and display at their Seattle locations (stores cover materials adjustment and printing costs).
- Ongoing technical assistance to ensure e-benefit implementation is successful, including collaboration on problem solving and process improvement and providing program update memos as needed.
- Ongoing customer service to field customer inquiries on Fresh Bucks program usage.

VI. Selection Criteria and Scoring Rubric

Applications will be reviewed by a panel of City of Seattle staff and community partners. Stores will be prioritized for selection based on the following criteria and scoring rubric. The full list of application questions is available in the application overview [available on the website](#).

Table 3: Supermarket and Grocery Store Chain Scoring Rubric

Q# ³	Application Question or Data Point	Scoring Criteria
Accessibility and Community Preference – 35 points possible		
5	How many of your stores are located within Seattle city limits?	Retailer has multiple locations within Seattle City limits that could be utilized by Fresh Bucks customers.
6	Please give us the address(es) of store location(s) within Seattle city limits.	Retailer will receive full points if all Seattle locations are within 0.25 miles of priority neighborhoods identified through the City of Seattle’s Race and Social Equity Index.
		Retailer will receive full points if each Seattle store location is within 0.25 miles of a transit stop running at a regular frequency (at least once every 30 minutes).
18	Please take an average of the percent of SNAP/EBT sales at the two store locations that have the highest SNAP/EBT sales. If you only	Retailer will receive a score based on average percent of SNAP/EBT sales. Scores will be tiered high to low amongst applicants.

³ Corresponding application question number as listed in the application overview [available here](#).



Q# ³	Application Question or Data Point	Scoring Criteria
	have one store location, just provide the percent of SNAP/EBT sales at that location.	
22	What steps do you take to create a retail environment that is welcoming for diverse, lower income and non-English speaking/reading customers?	Retailer demonstrates an understanding of the customers served at each location, what is needed to create welcoming environments, and describes specific actions to create and maintain these environments.
Produce Selection – 30 points possible		
19	<p>How many types⁴ of produce are available at one of your average store locations on a given day?</p> <p>Retailers are also asked to provide a list of produce types typically available and average number of varieties within each using a template provided on page 7 of the application overview.</p>	<p>Retailer must provide at least 25 types of produce to be eligible for this opportunity. Retailer will receive points for providing more than 25 types of produce.</p> <p>The list of produce types will be used to confirm the number provided by the retailer.</p>
23	Please tell us about the cultural needs and preferences of the customers and communities served at each of your Seattle store locations, particularly produce preferences. Please include how you assess and respond to those preferences.	Retailer demonstrates clear efforts to understand and provide the produce most relevant to customers that frequent each store.
25	How often is fresh, culturally relevant produce that is responsive to customer preferences stocked in your store(s)?	Culturally relevant produce is stocked weekly.
20	What percentage of your overall produce inventory (on an annual basis) is sourced from Washington State farms?	Retailers will receive tiered scores based on percent of local produce procurement.
24	<p>Please tell us more about your local sourcing, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often you source produce directly from farmers rather than distributors, • How you address and communicate seasonal availability of Washington-grown products to customers, and 	Retailer demonstrates clear efforts to source some produce directly from farmers, as well as plans for providing and promoting seasonally relevant Washington-grown produce and the farms from which it is sourced.

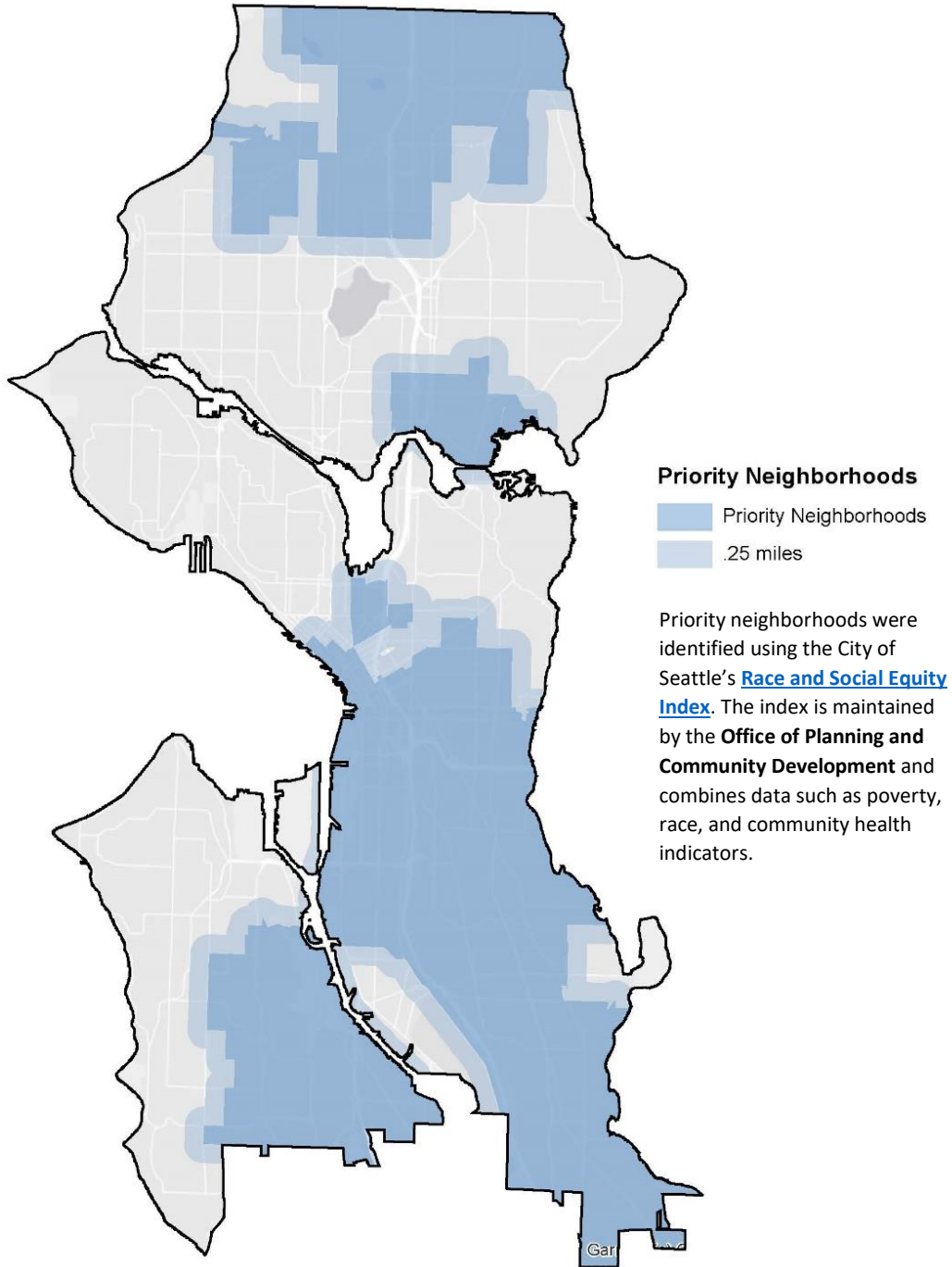
⁴ By *types of produce*, we are looking for produce items that are distinct from each other rather than varieties within one type. For example, apples count as one type even if the store provides multiple varieties of apple. Common groupings of produce, such as citrus, melons, berries and leafy greens will each count as one type as well.



Q# ³	Application Question or Data Point	Scoring Criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If and how you communicate the specific farm source, farm name, or brand of Washington-grown products. 	
Fair Labor and Community Engagement - 15 points possible		
26	We are looking to partner with stores that actively inform staff about their rights under Seattle’s labor laws through onboarding, management training, and posting posters in languages relevant to staff. Please tell us about the actions you take at your stores.	Retailer demonstrates a commitment to complying with applicable labor laws ⁵ by actively informing employees about their rights through multiple methods and providing training for managers and supervisors about supporting employee labor rights.
27	Do you provide any benefits (retirement, scholarships, training, etc.) to employees above and beyond what is required by city and state ordinance?	Retailer will receive additional points for providing employees with additional benefits such as retirement, scholarships, resources for training/professional development, etc.
28	<p>The City of Seattle values living-wage job opportunities for all residents. Please answer the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What pathways does your company offer cashiers, stockers, and other floor staff to progress to management and other leadership positions? How do you track progress and outcomes on these opportunities? 	Retailer demonstrates clear and consistent efforts to train and promote cashiers, stockers, and other floor staff to management and other leadership positions. Retailer has clear measurements to track progress and outcomes.
29	What steps are you taking to engage the community and invest in the neighborhoods where your Seattle stores are located?	Store demonstrates clear efforts to engage with and invest in the communities served by Seattle-based locations. This may include but is not limited to hosting community events, neighborhood-based hiring, and making investments in community well-being.
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 80		

⁵ Applicable labor laws include grocery employee hazard pay (for stores that employ more than 500 people worldwide), safe and sick time, minimum wage, wage theft, fair chance employment, and secure scheduling. Learn more from the City of Seattle [Office of Labor Standards](#).

APPENDIX A: Race and Social Equity Index Priority Areas





APPENDIX B: Example Scope of Work

Below is an example Scope of Work for Fresh Bucks retail partners. Aspects of the scope of work may change depending on the unique needs and operations of each retailer.

TASK 1: Implement Fresh Bucks Program at eligible retail locations.

- 1.1 Implement Fresh Bucks at the following store locations: *List store locations*
- 1.2 Coordinate with the City and third-party technology provider (Solutran) to integrate and implement ongoing e-benefit processing with the retailer's Point-of-Sale system.
 - 1.2.1 Retailer is responsible for associated costs of operating Fresh Bucks e-benefits processing, including but not limited to annual license and transaction fees.
 - 1.2.2 Retailer will hold an additional contract with Solutran to set up benefit processing.
 - 1.2.3 Retailer will be required to share applicable tax and banking information with the City and Solutran for reimbursement.
- 1.3 Train staff on Fresh Bucks implementation protocol.
 - 1.3.1 Current staff must be trained on initial program implementation.
 - 1.3.2 New hires must be provided orientation to Fresh Bucks program policies and procedures.
 - 1.3.3 All staff must be culturally competent and aware of racial equity principals to inform how they interact with Fresh Bucks customers. All stores must provide annual staff and leadership training in cultural competency, racial equity, and/or race and social justice. Stores may choose their own training to meet this requirement.
- 1.4 Monitor Fresh Bucks transactions to ensure benefits are used for fresh produce purchases.
- 1.5 Create a welcoming environment for Fresh Bucks customers, including but not limited to: friendly and knowledgeable cashiers, multi-lingual signage as needed, and timely resolution of customer service issues.

Deliverables

- Share plan with the City for store training at participating retail sites. Plan must include training for initial implementation for store managers and frontline staff, orientation for new hires, and annual racial equity/cultural competency training.
- Share plan with the City about creating a welcoming and positive shopping experience for Fresh Bucks customers.
- Set-up process completed and contract in place with Solutran.

TASK 2: Track and submit Fresh Bucks data and participate in evaluation activities as requested.

- 2.1 Submit aggregate metrics related to Fresh Bucks customer shopping behavior to inform program evaluation and planning. Metrics include the following:
 - Total produce sales from transactions that include Fresh Bucks (annual)
 - Total sales from transactions that include Fresh Bucks (annual)
 - Avg produce purchase amount from transactions that include Fresh Bucks (annual)
 - Avg total purchase amount from transactions that include Fresh Bucks (annual)
 - Most popular products purchased in Fresh Bucks transactions
 - Avg increase in year over year total produce purchases by individual (where available with loyalty card or other data.)



NOTE: All data provided to the City of Seattle is available for use by the City of Seattle in evaluation and reporting and will become publicly available information.

- 2.2 Participate in end of the year interviews and/or focus groups as part of process or outcome evaluation activities.

Deliverables

- Provide the City with requested information on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis as noted in the Deliverables timeline table above.

TASK 3: Coordinate with the City of Seattle.

- 3.1 Identify one individual from the retailer to serve as the main point of contact who will maintain regular communication with the City.
- 3.2 Participate in meetings, store visits, and events convened by the City of Seattle related to Fresh Bucks planning and implementation.
- 3.3 Maintain regular communication with the City of Seattle and notify City staff or program issues within one week of occurrence.

Deliverables

- Provide follow-up documentation to City of Seattle of plan and results of response to customer service issues identified by City and/or store staff.

TASK 4: Conduct outreach and promotion for the Fresh Bucks program.

- 4.1 Conduct marketing efforts to promote Fresh Bucks program availability at retail locations. All material that uses Fresh Bucks logo must be developed in partnership with and approved by the City of Seattle. Retail partner will assume applicable development and printing costs.
- 4.2 Coordinate with the City to receive approval for any co-branded marketing material.
- 4.3 Participate, as requested, in media events about the Fresh Bucks program.
- 4.4 Notify City of Seattle of any media inquiries about the Fresh Bucks program.
- 4.5 Participate in coordinated program-wide outreach planning to maximize the impact of Fresh Bucks outreach efforts by the City.

Deliverables

- Report outreach activities conducted, as requested by the City
- Submit copies of all Fresh Bucks-related press releases and earned media.

All Work is subject to City review and approval. The Provider shall confer with the City periodically and prepare and present information and materials (e.g. detailed outline of completed Work) requested by the City to determine the adequacy of the Work or Provider's progress.

The City agrees to support the Consultant as follows:

TASK 1: Provide technical assistance.

- 1.1 Provide staff with Fresh Bucks training materials and support, including orientation material outlining program policies and procedures, program update memos, and train-the-trainer sessions for store staff.



- 1.2 Provide ongoing technical assistance as needed, including collaboration on problem solving and process improvement.
- 1.3 Provide recommendations for racial equity, cultural competency, and/or race and social justice training and resources for store staff.
- 1.4 Coordinate with Solturan and retailer on initial and ongoing program implementation.
- 1.5 Conduct store visits to monitor program implementation.

TASK 2: Assist with Fresh Bucks program outreach.

- 2.1 Partner with local Community-Based Organizations to provide peer-to-peer outreach to low-income communities about Fresh Bucks.
- 2.2 Launch and manage ongoing Fresh Bucks promotional campaign.

TASK 3: Provide Fresh Bucks marketing and promotional materials.

- 3.1 Provide print-ready promotional materials in different languages (e.g. posters, trifold brochures, vendor signs) for retailer printing.

TASK 4: Provide ongoing customer service to field customer inquiries on Fresh Bucks program usage.

- 4.1 Field customer service contacts and provide a summary of incidents to retailer at least monthly.
- 4.2 Collaborate with retailer to ensure swift resolution of customer service issues in alignment with program policies and procedures.