



Kroger Announces Go Fresh & Local Supplier Accelerator

America's largest grocery retailer invites local and regional growers and producers to apply for new accelerator program

CINCINNATI, May 12, 2021 – The Kroger Co. (NYSE: KR) today announced the [Go Fresh & Local Supplier Accelerator](#), a new partnership program inviting American growers and producers to apply for the opportunity to work with the retailer. The program, sponsored by [Gourmet Foods International](#), will enable Kroger to discover new suppliers to support the continued expansion of its fresh departments – including produce, deli, bakery, meat, seafood, dairy, specialty cheeses, and floral – and its commitment to being *Fresh for Everyone™*.

Starting today and through May 31, suppliers can apply to join the Go Fresh & Local Supplier Accelerator, which will be held in Cincinnati in August. In collaboration with Efficient Collaborative Retail Marketing and RangeMe, Kroger's category management and fresh director team will review applications in multiple rounds, selecting 15 finalists (one finalist per region per category) to attend the event. All finalists will present to a panel of judges during a pitch session, with one overall winner selected from each region. The prize package for the five overall winners includes product placement on shelf within Kroger's Family of Companies; recommended partnerships with Gourmet Foods International; and business development coaching from Kroger merchandising and sales leaders as well as PearlRock Partners CEO Brian Kelley, a 30-year consumer product industry veteran and former president of Keurig Green Mountain and Coca-Cola Refreshments.

“At Kroger, our Fresh for Everyone mission is anchored in consistently and creatively providing fresh and affordable food to our customers,” said Dan De La Rosa, Kroger's group vice president of fresh merchandising. “We're dedicated to fostering innovation and investing in local, regional, and small businesses that make the best of food accessible to all. Our first Go Fresh & Local Supplier Accelerator is an extension of our commitment and we're eager to invite suppliers of every size to participate, providing the potential to grow our businesses together.”

Kroger welcomes growers and producers to apply to the relevant regional categories below, in alignment with the following regional versus local grouping criteria:

- **Regions:**
 - Region 1: QFC, Fred Meyer, Ralphps, and Food 4 Less

- Region 2: Fry's Food Stores, Smith's, King Soopers, City Market, and Dillons
- Region 3: Kroger Houston, Kroger Dallas, Kroger Delta, and Kroger Nashville
- Region 4: Mariano's, Metro Market, Pick 'n Save, Kroger Central, Kroger Michigan, Kroger Columbus
- Region 5: Kroger Atlanta, Kroger Mid-Atlantic, Kroger Louisville, Harris Teeter and Kroger Cincinnati-Dayton
- **Groupings:**
 - **Local:**
 - Small producers;
 - Located in-state or the immediate market;
 - Community-inspired and locally relevant items;
 - Merchandised in less than approximately 100 stores.
 - **Regional:**
 - Larger producers;
 - Cross state and division boundaries;
 - Still locally relevant to customers;
 - Merchandised in approximately 100 or more stores.

“Kroger is committed to offering the best assortment of fresh products enabled by an innovative portfolio of suppliers. In 2020 alone, we invested \$4.1 billion in diverse suppliers — a 21% increase versus the previous year — and we’re working with intention to scale that number to \$10 billion by 2030,” said Stuart Aitken, Kroger’s chief merchant and marketing officer. “The Go Fresh & Local Supplier Accelerator will help us achieve our goal as well as advance our freshness commitment in our nearly 2,800 stores and across our Kroger.com e-commerce services, including Pickup, Delivery, and Ship.”

To apply and learn more about the Go Fresh & Local Supplier Accelerator, visit TheKrogerCo.com/GoFreshLocal.

Media Assets

To download Kroger store and fresh department photography, visit <https://brandfolder.com/kroger/go-fresh-local-supplier-accelerator>.

About Kroger

At The [Kroger](#) Co. (NYSE: [KR](#)), we are dedicated to our Purpose: to Feed the Human Spirit™. We are nearly half a million associates who serve over nine million customers daily through a seamless digital shopping experience and 2,800 retail food stores under a variety of [banner names](#), serving America through food inspiration and uplift, and creating

#ZeroHungerZeroWaste communities by 2025. To learn more about us, visit our [newsroom](#) and investor relations [site](#).

-30-

Contacts

Kroger

Media: Sheila Regehr, (620) 200-3209 sheila.regehr@dillonstores.com

Investors: Rebekah Manis, (513) 762-4969