

**A SIMPLE GUIDE TO  
STARTING YOUR BUYING CLUB**

**What is a Buying Club?** “In a buying club a group of friends and families get together to purchase in bulk together. No real paperwork or organizational structure needs to be in place. However, a little organization and written records might help (smile).” “We just want to emphasize that it is not the paperwork, but it is the group's determination to work together that is the key for success. This is why we suggest starting small and working with people that you already know, TRUST, and can depend on. Of course that may be a tall order in itself.” ~ Dr. Ridgley A. Mu'min Muhammad

**Why is it important?** “Our knowledge of self, others, and the time should force us to become more prudent in our spending. Unnecessary spending by trying to keep pace with the wealthy of this country has done more to put us on the path of the 'prodigal son' than anything else. Let us be taught how to spend and save by those of us who desire to see us out of poverty and want.” ~ **The Honorable Elijah Muhammad - A Sound Economic Plan I, Message To The Blackman, page 194.**

“Spending money is like shooting an economic weapon. Black people spend over \$700 billion per year on consumer items without thinking about who is benefiting from those dollars. There are enemies to black people who manufacture products that they know black people will buy, then use the profits to finance their anti-Black programs. We spend 8 hours or more a day working for someone else, then turn right around and spend our money with his cousins. Then when we are treated badly by Whites, we run to some black organization for help. What if we turned our buying power into an economic strategy for the development of wealth? Suppose that we set up co-op stores and bought our products at wholesale or below, then sold these items to ourselves with a reasonable markup to cover expenses and a savings program. At the end of the year each of our accounts at the co-op would increase by the amount of money we saved by buying at the co-op. There difference between the wholesale price and retail price of consumer goods could become the basis for generating your own personal wealth instead of making other communities rich.” ~ Commonomics - Dr. Ridgley A. Mu'min Muhammad

**What does setting up and participating in a Buying Club do?** When The Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad purchased ship loads of products for us like the millions of pounds of whiting fish from Peru, was there a “market” already established for those products? When the Black Farmers put thousands, millions of seed in the ground to grow the food we need for life, is there a “market that guarantees sales” for that Farmer's products? Our Buying Clubs become these markets!

The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan has been asking us to establish Buying Club, Co-ops throughout our cities for over 30 years, from 1980 until today! When we set up and participate in Buying Clubs:

- We establish sustainable markets for our local Black Farmers. They grow the food and we guarantee the commitment to continually buy the product.
- We increase our buying power by pooling our resources. The unity of our dollars puts us in a position to make demands for fair and reduced prices on those products we are not yet producing.
- We bring affordable, fresh food to our communities and start to develop within our communities a commitment to take responsibility for feeding ourselves as a productive community.
- We encourage and educate families on how to include more fruits and vegetables in their diets making healthier communities. We have to stop the horrible statistics in some of our communities of liquor stores outnumbering grocery stores 100 to 1!
- We expose our youth and teach them the process of food distribution. Teach them by example that they can take responsibility for their community, for their food supply and their health.

# Getting Started



## What you will need

**Resolve!** (definition - firm determination to do something. synonyms: decision, resolution, commitment.)

You are reading this guide because you have a DESIRE to initiate starting up and developing a Produce Buying Club in your community. Not an impossible task but definitely an endeavor that will take commitment, organization of people and supplies, work.

We are taught by The Honorable Minister Louis in the Study Guides on Building the Will, that Desire FEEDS the Will. Ask yourself, How strong is your Desire to get the job done? Good, let's go!

### 1. Gain knowledge

You have a support base in the National Ministry of Agriculture. Visit the website [www.noimoa.com](http://www.noimoa.com) where you will find a resource list of individuals in your area that you can contact and will be a source of help to you. If there is no one in your area, do contact the National Buying Club Committee Chairperson, which is also listed on the resource list.

Study other buying clubs. In the tools section of this guide, you will find a list of names/cities where produce buying clubs have successfully started. You may also contact those individuals for information as the need arises to help walk you through the process.

Participate in the monthly blogtalk radio broadcast hosted by the Buying Club Committee every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in the month 7pm CST on [www.blogtalkradio.com/noimoa](http://www.blogtalkradio.com/noimoa).

### 2. Build a Team

Who is with you? (**No, you can't do it all yourself!**)

**Core Group** – Operating a Buying Club brings with it the responsibility of sharing the work required to keep the doors open. “Many hands make light work.” So there are always those individuals who share the vision and are willing to put in the time it takes to “make it happen.” You will need to identify those individuals and secure their commitment. Without that kind of commitment, you may begin your Buying Club only to end very quickly. The “core group” can be responsible for:

- Locating your produce source(s).
- Determining frequency of your buying club events.
- Determining how your buying club will function.
- Organizing the members; those that are willing to purchase what your buying club supplies.
- Organizing shopping list.

- Organizing and disseminating information about the buying club events, etc.
- Collecting funds, writing receipts and doing simple record keeping.
- Organizing transportation from point of purchase (A) to distribution point (B).
- Preparing distribution site keeping it available, clean and organized.
- Coordinating distribution of purchases: equal division, bagging/boxing, pick up and/or delivery.
- Clean up.
- Solicit feedback!
- Set goals and plan to further grow and develop your Buying Club.

At first, you and your core group may not need to do all of these tasks. However, as membership grows, and with planning, organization, and good management and motivation, you can share tasks with other members of the group. Remember, many more hands make much lighter work!

**NOTE:** If you are part of an organization, share your desire/plans with the leadership before you present them to the overall body. Their supporting and participating in the buying club will make it much easier to attract additional members.

### **3. Determine How The Buying Club Will Function**

- Where will your buying club be held? Does your group, congregation, or association have a facility you to use? If not, consider a public or non-profit facility. A business may have office or warehouse space they may donate. You can always use your home. I know of two buying clubs that used their garage and driveway.
- Do you have a truck, van, or SUV to transport the cases of produce?
- How often will you meet to distribute food? Weekly? Biweekly? Monthly? It depends on how many participants and helpers you have. The more often, the more work. Start monthly or bi-weekly and let the participation drive you to a meeting more frequently.
- Will you store produce? If so, you will need cold storage. In our buying club, we received orders and payment in advance. This way we could purchase just enough to fill our member orders, without having to store anything. Any excess food was given to members as a “bonus” or donated to those less fortunate than ourselves.
- Miscellaneous operations ( handling monies, bags or boxes, deliver or not, volunteering, etc.)

### **4. Locate produce sources**

- Keep in mind purchasing local produce supports local economy and allows you the availability of the freshest produce.
- Decide if your buying club will offer natural/holistic/organic produce, conventional produce or a combination of both.
- Check within your current network for farmers/gardeners you already know that can be a source of supply for some of the items you desire to offer.
- Visit your local county extension office to find local farms/gardens in your area that can be a source of supply. <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/>
- Visit USDA Market Terminal in your area. Their website will give you information on what’s in season in your state, what’s imported (not in season in your state) and current pricing for produce being sold. They do show information for conventional as well as some organic produce: <https://www.marketnews.usda.gov/mnp/fv-home>
- Farmer's Markets can also be food sources: [http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=AMS\\_Agency\\_Splash.xml](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=AMS_Agency_Splash.xml) (or just search for “USDA Agricultural Marketing Service”).
- You can also contact the NOI Min. Of Agricultural representative in your area. See the resource list on NOIMOA.

## **5. Invite Members**

- Promote the BC to its intended membership. You are primary marketing person. A closed mouth will never get fed.
- Preach the gospel of buying clubs.
- Advertise (if you desire to grow). Social Media, fliers, website, business cards, etc.

## **6. Hold First Buying Club Event**

- Make it a big deal! Be festive. Remember, this has to be **FUN!**
- Constantly remind your people why they are participating
- Have a place for the youth and the elderly

## **7. Solicit feedback & Self-evaluate**

- Ask the members what they like about the buying club, the actual event, and the produce.
- Ask them what to do to make the club and events better.
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## **8. Make adjustments**

If a number of members suggest similar changes, implement them if you can. We suggest compiling a simple questionnaire.

## **9. Repeat Steps 5-8.**

## TOOLS

**This list of helpful tools are not mandatory, however thoughtfully recommended.**

### Books and Lectures:

An Economic Blueprint - pages 173-175, Message to the Blackman in America - by The Honorable Elijah Muhammad 1965

How to Eat to Live Volumes I and II - by The Honorable Elijah Muhammad 1967 and 1972

Why Did God Permit Devil to Exist (CD) - by The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, August 29, 1980

We Must Become Productive (DVD/CD) - by The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, November 11, 1984

The Blackman Must Do For Self or Suffer the Consequences(DVD/CD) - by The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, (Saviours' Day 1991), October 7, 1991

Solutions to the Terrible Condition of Black America (DVD/CD)- by The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, April 18, 1992

Food, Clothing and Shelter: The Vision of the 3 Year Economic Program (DVD/CD) - by The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, August 30, 1992

Muhammad's Economic Program to End Poverty and Want - by The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, (18th Anniversary of the Holy Day of Atonement) October 20, 2013

The Time and What Must Be Done 52 week Lecture Series - by The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan

### Links:

[www.noimoa.com](http://www.noimoa.com) - National Ministry of Agriculture

[www.blogtalkradio.com/noimoa](http://www.blogtalkradio.com/noimoa) - Weekly NOIMOA Blog Talk Radio Program

[www.foodcoop.com/](http://www.foodcoop.com/) - Park Slope Food Coop, New York, NY

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumers%27\\_Cooperative\\_of\\_Berkeley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumers%27_Cooperative_of_Berkeley) - History of Berkely Cooperative

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liOm3JQ1g-o> - video: Consumer Coops of Berkeley

<http://www.coopdirectory.org/bp001.htm> Tips From Successful Buying Clubs