

Compass Academy Food Access Partner Outreach Guide

Internal working guide | Research, initial outreach, and partner discovery

1. Opportunity Snapshot

Topic	Current Working Information
Organization	Compass Academy, a school community serving approximately 180-200 families.
Potential location	2401 S. Delaware St., Denver, Colorado.
Timing	Potential launch in FY 2027-28 or FY 2028-29, depending on funding, renovations, and occupancy timing.
Space	Current concept is roughly classroom-sized, with flexibility if a strong partner has different space requirements.
Operating model	Compass would ideally lease the space to a partner that operates the food/grocery service independently.
Who it would serve	Compass families first, with interest in making the resource available to the surrounding community as well.
Experience desired	A dignified, accessible food and grocery experience that feels more like a small market or bodega than a traditional prepacked food distribution model.
Financial posture	Exact rent/subsidy terms are not yet set. Compass is interested in learning what partners currently pay, what funding supports their model, and whether the opportunity could lower occupancy costs.
Next step if interested	After an initial fit conversation, John can connect the organization directly with Brandon Jones, Executive Director, and coordinate an in-person meeting/site conversation.

2. Core Talking Points

The goal of early outreach is not to sell a fully designed program. It is to identify organizations whose model could fit the opportunity, understand what they would need, and determine whether a deeper conversation with Compass makes sense.

- Compass is exploring a future food-access partnership tied to a potential new space in southwest Denver.
- The school wants to create something that gives families genuine choice and dignity: a market-like grocery experience rather than simply distributing predetermined boxes of food.
- The potential space is at 2401 S. Delaware St. and could be available in the FY27-28 to FY28-29 window, depending on funding and renovations.
- Compass currently serves roughly 180-200 families and would like the resource to be useful to the broader community as well.
- The preferred structure is for an experienced partner to operate independently in leased space, rather than Compass becoming the food-service operator.
- The physical footprint is flexible at this stage. The starting assumption is approximately a classroom-sized space, but Compass wants to understand what a viable partner would actually need.
- Compass is open to learning about a partner's economics: current rent, operating subsidies, grants or public funding, staffing model, refrigeration/storage needs, and what would make a school-based site viable.
- No final financial arrangement has been set. The intent is to find a workable model and, if possible, create a lower-cost or otherwise advantageous space for the right partner.

What not to promise yet

- A specific opening date or guaranteed occupancy date.
- A specific rent amount, subsidy, free space, or buildout contribution.
- An exact square footage or final space configuration.
- A guaranteed level of customer volume or revenue.
- That Compass will operate, staff, stock, or manage the food program.

3. What We Are Trying to Learn From Potential Partners

- How does your current food/grocery access model work, and who do you primarily serve?
- Do you operate fixed retail/community market locations, mobile models, pop-ups, or partnerships inside other organizations?
- What size and type of space do you typically need? What are the must-haves (refrigeration, freezer, dry storage, loading access, sinks, power, parking, etc.)?
- How is your model funded? What portion comes from earned revenue, grants, government programs, philanthropy, or donated food?
- What do you currently pay for space, and what lease structure would make a new site financially viable?
- What level of customer traffic or household participation would you need to justify a site?
- Would serving both a school community and the surrounding neighborhood fit your mission and operating model?
- What staffing would you need, and would you expect to hire locally or use existing staff?
- What lead time would you need to open a new site?

- What information would you need from Compass to decide whether this is worth exploring further?

4. Suggested Conversation Flow

1. Open with the purpose: You are exploring fit, not presenting a finished RFP or asking for a commitment.

30-second opener

"I'm supporting Compass Academy in southwest Denver as they explore a food-access partnership connected to a potential new building. They are interested in creating a more dignified, market-like grocery experience for families — something closer to a neighborhood market or bodega than a traditional prepacked food distribution model. I'm reaching out to a small number of organizations to understand their models, whether this kind of site might fit, and what would need to be true for it to work."

2. Give the basic facts: Share the location, rough timeline, family/community reach, flexible space concept, and preference for an independently operated partner.

3. Turn the conversation toward them: Spend most of the call understanding their model, economics, facility needs, and appetite for partnership.

4. Test fit directly: Ask whether the concept sounds potentially aligned and what would make them want to learn more.

Fit-check question

"Based on what I've described, does this sound like the kind of opportunity your organization would potentially explore? If so, what are the biggest questions or conditions you would want to understand before going further?"

5. Close with a concrete next step: If there is real interest, offer to bring Brandon Jones into the next conversation and, when useful, coordinate an in-person discussion/site visit.

5. Outreach Email Templates

Template A — Initial cold outreach

Subject: Exploring a potential food access partnership with Compass Academy

Hi [Name],

I'm working with **Compass Academy**, a tuition-free middle school serving students and families in Southwest Denver. Compass has a strong focus on whole-child support, bilingual learning, and close partnership with families and the surrounding community.

Compass is currently exploring the possibility of moving into a larger facility and, as part of that vision, creating a broader **community hub** with partners who could provide meaningful services for families and neighbors.

One opportunity we're beginning to explore is a food-access model that feels more like a **small neighborhood market or bodega**, where families can choose fresh groceries and other items in a welcoming setting, rather than relying only on pre-packed food distribution.

I reached out because **[1 personalized sentence about their organization/model and why it caught your attention]**.

I'm helping Compass identify potential partners and learn what models might actually be feasible. I'd love to spend 20–30 minutes learning more about your work and exploring whether there could be a fit, either directly or through another organization you might recommend.

If you're open to a conversation, feel free to reply here, or you can grab a time on my calendar if that's easiest: [schedule a conversation](#)

You can also call or text me at 812-454-2456.

Thanks,

John Clark

Best Days Education & Leadership Consulting

Supporting Compass Academy with partner research and outreach

Template B — Shorter outreach / contact form version

Subject: Denver community food-access partnership

Hi [Name],

I'm helping Compass Academy in southwest Denver explore a partner to operate a market-style food/grocery resource in a potential future school/community space. The goal is a dignified shopping experience for roughly 180-200 school families and potentially the surrounding community, rather than a traditional boxed-food distribution model.

I'd love to learn more about [Organization]'s model and whether this could be worth exploring together. Would you be open to a brief introductory call?

Best,
John

Template C — Warm introduction / referral

Subject: Introduction — Compass Academy food access opportunity

Hi [Name],

[Referrer] suggested I reach out to you. I'm supporting Compass Academy as they explore a food-access partner for a potential new space in southwest Denver.

The school is interested in a model that provides families with real choice and feels more like a small neighborhood market than a standard food distribution program. Compass would ideally have an experienced organization operate the service independently, with the opportunity to serve both school families and the broader community.

We are still early in the process, so I'm hoping first to learn about your model and what would make a site like this viable for your organization. If it sounds promising, I can then connect you with Compass Executive Director Brandon Jones for a deeper conversation.

Would you have 20-30 minutes for an introductory conversation?

Thanks,
John

Template D — Follow-up after no response

Subject: Re: Exploring a food-access partnership in southwest Denver

Hi [Name],

I wanted to follow up on the note below in case this opportunity may fit your work. We are still in the early learning stage and are not asking organizations to commit to anything. I'm simply hoping to understand whether the concept could align with your model and what conditions would be important for a site like this to work.

If you are not the right person, I'd also appreciate being pointed toward whoever handles partnerships, site expansion, or community food access for your organization.

Thanks,
John

6. Quick Phone / Voicemail Script

Phone opener

"Hi, this is John Clark. I'm supporting Compass Academy in southwest Denver as they explore a partner to operate a market-style food and grocery resource in a potential future school/community space. I'm reaching out to learn more about your organization's model and whether this kind of location might fit your work. I'm not calling with a formal proposal — we're in the discovery stage and trying to understand what would make a partnership viable. I'd love to schedule a brief conversation with the right person on your team."

Voicemail

"Hi [Name], this is John Clark. I'm working with Compass Academy in southwest Denver on a potential community food-access partnership and thought [Organization] might be worth connecting with. We're exploring a market-style grocery model for school families and the surrounding community. I'd love to learn about your model and see if there may be a fit. You can reach me at [phone], and I'll also send a short email with context. Thanks."

7. Simple Qualification Lens

Area	What to Look For	Notes / Signal
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Mission fit	Serves families/community; emphasizes food access, dignity, affordability, or neighborhood access.	Strong / Possible / Weak
Model fit	Can operate a market, grocery, retail, mobile, or hybrid food-access model rather than only periodic box distribution.	Strong / Possible / Weak
Site fit	Has realistic facility needs for the available footprint or can articulate what would be required.	Strong / Possible / Weak
Financial viability	Can explain funding/revenue mix and what lease or subsidy structure would be workable.	Clear / Needs follow-up
Geographic interest	Interested in southwest Denver and serving both Compass families and nearby residents.	Yes / Maybe / No
Readiness/timeline	Could plausibly plan for a FY27-28 or FY28-29 opening.	Aligned / Unclear / Misaligned
Next-step interest	Wants to meet Brandon, visit the site, or share more detailed requirements.	High / Medium / Low

8. Recommended Internal Note After Each Contact

- Organization + contact name/title
- Date and outreach method
- One-sentence description of their operating model
- Population/geography they currently serve
- Space/facility requirements
- Funding/revenue/lease considerations
- Initial fit assessment and key concern
- Next step, owner, and follow-up date

9. Feasibility Questions

Area	Questions to Ask	What You're Listening For
Initial Interest	"At a high level, does this sound like the kind of opportunity your organization would ever consider?"	A genuine yes/maybe versus polite interest

Model Fit	“How does your organization typically provide food or grocery access now?” “Do you operate any market, pantry, mobile market, retail, or community food models?”	Whether their current model could translate into this setting
Population Fit	“Do you currently serve families similar to Compass Academy’s community?” “Would serving school families and the surrounding neighborhood fit your mission?”	Alignment with families, geography, and mission
Desired Experience	“Compass is interested in something that feels more like a small market or bodega than a traditional pre-packed food distribution. Is that consistent with anything you currently do or would want to explore?”	Whether they can deliver the dignity/choice aspect Compass wants
Operating Independence	“Would your organization be comfortable operating a site largely independently if the space were provided through a lease arrangement?”	Whether Compass would need to manage the program
Space Needs	“What would you typically need in a physical space to make a model like this work?” “Are there any must-haves around refrigeration, storage, loading, utilities, or square footage?”	Immediate deal-breakers or renovation needs
Financial Model	“How are sites like this typically funded or sustained?” “Do they rely on sales, SNAP/WIC, grants, philanthropy, contracts, donated food, or some mix?”	Whether the economics are plausible
Lease / Cost Sensitivity	“How significant are facility costs in determining whether a site is viable?” “If Compass were able to make the space relatively affordable, would that materially change your interest?”	Whether subsidized space is actually meaningful
Scale / Volume	“Compass currently serves roughly 180–200 families, with the possibility of serving the surrounding community as well. Does that feel like enough potential demand for your model?”	Whether the customer base is large enough
Timing	“If this were a fit, what kind of lead time would your organization need to explore or launch a new location?”	Fit with FY27/28 or FY28/29 timeline
Decision Process	“Who else in your organization would need to be involved in determining whether this is worth pursuing?”	Whether you have the right person and how serious the pathway is

Interest Test	“Based on what you’ve heard so far, is there enough here that you’d be interested in a conversation with Compass Academy’s Executive Director to explore it further?”	Your clearest go/no-go signal
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