



Ohio Healthy Food Access – Join the Effort

Going to the grocery store is something most of us take for granted. But for **29.7 million people** in America who live in food deserts—areas where it is difficult to buy affordable, healthy food—that trip to the grocery store is anything but easy. Low-income ZIP codes have 25 percent fewer chain supermarkets compared with middle-income ZIP codes. The result? Access to healthy produce, lean protein, dairy and other staples is tough at best, and simply not an option for far too many.



Not having a local grocery store can have far-ranging impacts on people’s lives. Families who live in communities where they can’t find **a bag of apples** or a head of lettuce are at greater risk of becoming overweight and obese. Studies show that the closer we are to neighborhood supermarkets, the more likely we are to have healthier lives and lower body weight too.

Fortunately, there’s a solution to these problems: healthy food financing. Healthy food financing programs create public-private partnerships that make a real difference for individuals, communities and even entire states. This critical loan and grant financing helps healthy and affordable food retailers overcome the higher initial barriers to entry into low-income and underserved communities—barriers like land acquisition financing, construction and workforce development.

Once grocery stores have been built in underserved communities, the results are dramatic. In Pennsylvania, an initial grant of \$30 million created 88 new grocery stores, 5,000 new jobs and \$190 million in total investment. What’s more, it brought healthy food choices to 400,000 Pennsylvanians who wouldn’t otherwise be able to access healthy produce, lean protein and whole grains.

It’s time for Ohio to consider a healthy food financing program. Please add your organizations voice to efforts to encourage increased access to healthy foods, including established of an Ohio Healthy Food Financing Program.

Add your organizational or coalition name as supporters. Simply submit the form below (with your contact information) to Linda FreemanWalker, Ohio Healthy Food Financing Campaign Manager at t-linda.freemanwalker@heart.org.

Name: _____ Organization: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

How did you hear about the effort? _____