



# NORTH CAROLINA ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH

## Healthy Corner Store Initiative

*What is the Healthy Corner Store Initiative?*

**The Healthy Corner Store Initiative (HCSI), officially the Healthy Food Small Retailer Program**, is housed in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The Initiative taps into a community's existing retail footprint to make healthier options more accessible. The HFSRP assesses communities for healthy foods, engages interested small retail store owners to offer healthier options, and then provides equipment to stock and sell healthy foods. The HFSRP also works with community partners and other agencies to provide participating retailers with marketing and technical assistance to help them promote the healthy foods they stock. Community partners also connect store owners with North Carolina farmers and fishermen, benefiting local agribusiness by expanding their market opportunities.

*Why does North Carolina need the HCSI?*

- North Carolina has more than **349 food deserts** across **80 counties**.
- A food desert is a low-income census tract where residents do not have access to a full-service grocery store within a 1-mile radius in urban settings or a 10-mile radius in rural settings.
- More than **1.5 million North Carolina residents** do not have access to the foods they need to live a healthy lifestyle.
- Limited food access and **food insecurity** adversely impact diet and health. Those who are food insecure are more likely to suffer from obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, some kinds of cancer, and other chronic conditions.
- **65%** of North Carolina adults were considered overweight or obese and more than **31%** of North Carolina children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese.
- The estimated total costs of eight risk factors related to overweight, obesity, and diabetes for adults is **\$54 billion** in North Carolina.

The HCSI is a win-win-win for North Carolina

- It strengthens small businesses by increasing profits for store owners.
- It creates new markets for North Carolina farmers and fishermen.
- It provides communities with healthier foods and has the potential to decrease chronic disease.

In 2016, the North Carolina General Assembly appropriated **\$250,000** to start the HCSI. While this is a great first step, the program needs additional funding to adequately address the needs of North Carolina citizens across the state and provide sufficient technical assistance to the participating store owners.

**Please include \$1 million in recurring funding for the Healthy Corner Store Initiative in this year's budget to continue and expand the efforts already underway.**