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NCDA&CS accepting applications for Healthy Food Small Retailer Program

RALEIGH – The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will offer grant assistance to convenience stores interested in offering healthier food options to those living in one of the state’s 349 food deserts in North Carolina. The funding is a part of the Healthy Food Small Retailer Program.

“The goal of the Healthy Food Small Retailer program is to help bring healthy locally grown foods to the 1.5 million people impacted by food deserts in North Carolina,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “Convenient stores are integral parts of fighting food insecurity in local communities.”

The Healthy Food Small Retailer Program, which is administered by the department, was established in the 2016 state budget bill (HB 1030). The 2019 program will reimburse participating stores for refrigeration, freezers and stocking equipment needed to offer healthier items.

Store owners have until March 4 to apply for priority consideration. Applications will continue to be accepted until March 31, subject to availability of funds.

In addition to being in a food desert (online search available at www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/), store owners applying for funding under HFSRP must meet the following criteria:

- Accept or agree to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits;
- Accept or agree to apply to accept Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits;
- Have no more than 3,000 square feet of heated floor space;
- Be established as a for-profit business at time of application;
- Have not previously received HFSRP funds.

Interested store owners can find more information about the program and download an application at www.ncagr.gov/HealthyRetailer. In addition, store owners may call 919-707-3173 or email HealthyRetailer@ncagr.gov.