



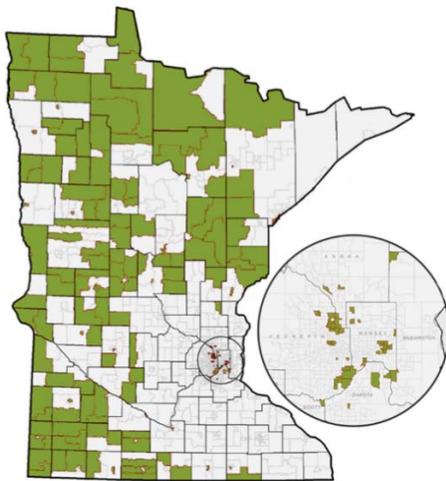
# Making healthy food available, affordable and accessible for Minnesotans

## The challenge...

Hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans live in areas where they have limited or no access to healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, low fat dairy, whole grains, and lean meats and poultry. This lack of access impacts Minnesotans of all ages who live in rural and urban locations alike.<sup>1</sup> Of the Minnesotans who face income and distance barriers to healthy and affordable foods, one in five are seniors 65 or older and one in four are children age 0-17. The lack of access has also resulted in significant health impacts, such as higher rates of obesity and diabetes, for many living in these regions.<sup>2</sup>

## A growing problem...

The food access challenge is growing – 53 of Minnesota's 87 counties experienced a decline in the number of grocery stores per 1,000 residents between 2007 and 2012.<sup>1</sup> The decline is being driven, in part, due to aging buildings in need of upkeep, including more energy-efficient equipment.



Low-income and Low Access census areas at > 10 miles (rural) and >1 mile (urban)

## Working to address the problem...

Bipartisan legislation approved by the Minnesota Legislature created and then provided seed money in 2017 for the Good Food Access Fund, which is operated by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. The fund is designed to provide grants, technical assistance and loans to help small grocery stores, corner markets, farmers markets and other retailers to provide healthy and affordable foods in those locations that currently lack access to such foods.

- The Good Food Access Fund also helps boost local economies, create jobs and generate tax revenue in communities that need it most, especially rural communities where the local grocery store is often the economic hub.
- The Good Food Access Fund is helping to create new and improved markets for Minnesota agriculture producers, including making it easier for grocery stores to carry locally grown fresh produce and meats, and expanding opportunities at farmers markets.

## Exceeding expectations...

In response to each of the RFP's released for grants from the fund, the response has been overwhelming, far exceeding available dollars. In 2017, while 57 separate projects applied for funding, dollars were only available for eight. Last year, more than 40 separate projects applied for funding, with requests totaling over \$800,000, but grants were only awarded to 14.<sup>3</sup> In 2019, requests for equipment grants alone totaled over \$1 million dollars. Because of this demand, legislation is being introduced in the Minnesota Legislature in 2019 to reinvest in and increase funding for the Good Food Access Fund.



<sup>1</sup> Mattessich, P. & Rausch, E. (2016). Healthy food access: A view of the landscape in Minnesota and lessons learned from healthy food financing initiatives. Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and Wilder Research.

[https://www.wilder.org/sites/default/files/imports/Healthy%20Food%20Access%20Study\\_Executive%20Summary\\_April%202016.pdf](https://www.wilder.org/sites/default/files/imports/Healthy%20Food%20Access%20Study_Executive%20Summary_April%202016.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Manon, M. & Kim, E. (2012). Food for every child: The need for more supermarkets in Minnesota. The Food Trust.

<http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/resources/library/food-for-every-child-the-need-for-more-supermarkets-in-minnesota>

<sup>3</sup> Minnesota Department of Agriculture. (2018) The Good Food Access Program: A report to the Minnesota Legislature.

<https://www.leg.state.mn.us/docs/2018/mandated/180212.pdf>