



S.C. Healthy Food Financing Initiative

Over one million South Carolinians are not able to purchase affordable, healthy food in their communities because of where they live. These communities are sometimes referred to as “food deserts”.

The S.C. Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) addresses this need by providing access to loans to support local farmers and businesses to renovate or expand different food projects in these communities, such as mobile markets, small food stores, grocery stores, and other healthy food enterprises.

At the present time, the S.C. Community Loan Fund (SCCLF), a non-profit that provides loans and technical assistance to communities, offers limited funding for this effort. With state appropriations SCCLF could leverage these dollars to increase access to healthy food options for many more communities. SCCLF has been in existence for over ten years and has a proven track record of working to revitalize under-served communities around the state. SCCLF has loaned more than \$25 million to support community economic development in South Carolina.

Enabling residents in neighborhoods to access affordable, healthy food matters because:

- Small farmers often need initial support in fostering the production, processing and sale of locally produced fruits and vegetables into local markets. Because of the recent historic flooding in our state, now would be an ideal time to offer our small farmers assistance to create a new market for their produce
- These efforts would create job opportunity and enhance community development
- Studies show that expanding the availability of nutritious food can combat obesity in children and adults
- Taxpayers are bearing the cost of obesity-related health issues through private insurance, Medicaid or Medicare expenses; currently obesity costs \$8.5 billion per year in South Carolina

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