

As Introduced

136th General Assembly

Regular Session

2025-2026

H. B. No. 543

Representatives Upchurch, Williams

Cosponsors: Representatives Brownlee, Mohamed, Lett, McNally, Brennan

To enact section 122.162 of the Revised Code to 1
create a food desert elimination grant program 2
and to make an appropriation. 3

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That section 122.162 of the Revised Code be 4
enacted to read as follows: 5

Sec. 122.162. (A) As used in this section, "food desert" 6
means a geographic area in which residents have limited access 7
to fruits, vegetables, and other healthful foods, through 8
grocery stores, farmer's markets, or other food providers, as 9
identified by the United States department of agriculture food 10
access research atlas. 11

(B) The department of development shall establish and 12
administer a food desert elimination grant program to 13
incentivize the establishment of grocery stores in food deserts 14
to provide access to healthy food in this state. The department 15
may adopt requirements and procedures as are necessary to 16
implement and administer the program. An individual grocery 17
retailer shall not receive a grant that exceeds fifteen thousand 18
dollars during a fiscal year. 19

(C) To qualify for a grant under this section, a grocery 20
retailer shall meet both of the following requirements: 21

(1) It sells or proposes to sell fresh fruit, vegetables, 22
shelf-stable items, and other healthful foods to consumers. 23

(2) It has established or proposes to establish a grocery 24
store in a food desert. 25

(D) The department shall develop an application process 26
that applicants shall utilize to receive a grant under this 27
section. The application shall include a requirement that 28
documentation be included with the application to verify that 29
the grocery retailer is or will be located in a food desert and 30
has plans to sell fresh fruits, vegetables, shelf-stable items, 31
and other healthful foods. 32

(E) Any grocery retailer that receives a grant under this 33
section shall provide quarterly reports to the department. The 34
quarterly reports shall include the amount of state funds 35
granted, the health impact of the program, and any other 36
information that the department considers necessary for program 37
evaluation and oversight. 38

Section 2. All items in this act are hereby appropriated 39
as designated out of any moneys in the state treasury to the 40
credit of the designated fund. For all operating appropriations 41
made in this act, those in the first column are for fiscal year 42
2026 and those in the second column are for fiscal year 2027. 43
The operating appropriations made in this act are in addition to 44
any other operating appropriations made for these fiscal years. 45

Section 3. 46

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A	DEV DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT		
B	General Revenue Fund		
C	GRF 195415 Business Development Services	\$200,000	\$200,000
D	TOTAL GRF General Revenue Fund	\$200,000	\$200,000
E	TOTAL ALL BUDGET FUND GROUPS	\$200,000	\$200,000

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	48
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The foregoing appropriation item 195415, Business	49
Development Services, shall be used to support the activities of	50
the food desert elimination grant program established under	51
section 122.162 of the Revised Code.	52

Section 4. Within the limits set forth in this act, the	53
Director of Budget and Management shall establish accounts	54
indicating the source and amount of funds for each appropriation	55
made in this act, and shall determine the manner in which	56
appropriation accounts shall be maintained. Expenditures from	57
operating appropriations contained in this act shall be	58
accounted for as though made in, and are subject to all	59
applicable provisions of, H.B. 96 of the 136th General Assembly.	60