

Mass. could do more to boost access to healthy, affordable food

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ACCORDING TO a 2010 study, more than 1 million Massachusetts residents live in urban and rural communities with limited access to markets carrying foods that are healthy and affordable. This leads to major public health issues such as obesity and diabetes, and hits communities of color and low-income communities the hardest.

The opening of the new Daily Table grocery store in Dorchester ([“Supermarket on a mission,”](#) Business, May 22) will help alleviate this problem, but we must do more. We need more places for families to buy healthy food in Dorchester and in communities across the state where residents deserve accessible and affordable food stores.

The Massachusetts Food Trust program was created by the Legislature in 2014 and is designed to provide loans, grants, and technical assistance to support new or expanded grocery stores and improved options for healthy food at places such as corner stores, mobile markets, and farmers markets in low- and moderate-income communities. However, this program has not been funded. The Legislature and the Baker administration should provide funding for its implementation.

Following successful examples in other states, public seed money would be matched with private dollars — funds that would result in the development of more stores like the Daily Table. Better access to healthy food would not only improve public health, but it would generate jobs and lead to economic development in communities that need it most.

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