

## Illinois Approves Spending for Fresh Food Fund

Article - [www.rwjf.org/publichealth/digest.jsp?id=10962](http://www.rwjf.org/publichealth/digest.jsp?id=10962)

The Illinois General Assembly has approved \$10 million in funding for the Illinois Fresh Food Fund, which seeks to stimulate supermarket development in underserved areas of the state, the Chicago Tribune reports. Approved as part of a \$3.1 billion public spending bill, the Fresh Food Fund will help grocers defray a portion of the approximately \$25 million in costs associated with opening a major supermarket, including costs for land acquisition, equipment purchase and infrastructure. The Illinois program is modeled after a similar effort in Pennsylvania that, since its launch in 2004, has helped finance 70 new supermarkets or grocery store renovations. According to David Vite, president of the Illinois Retail Merchants Association, which lobbied for the creation of the Fresh Food Fund, the program plans to raise an additional \$20 million from philanthropic groups to further enhance its efforts. The funding measure, along with the larger public health spending bill, now moves to Gov. Pat Quinn (D) for approval. The Illinois Fresh Food Fund is modeled after a larger effort in Pennsylvania pioneered by the Food Trust (Hughlett, Chicago Tribune, 6/3/09 [registration required]; Illinois Food Marketing Task Force release, 5/19/09). (Editor's Note: RWJF is supporting The Food Trust's efforts to increase access to affordable, nutritious foods in Illinois.)