

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

\$712,000

Loan financing received through IFF's Healthy Food Access Fund, capitalized by the federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative

23,000

Square feet of retail space in USDA-defined food desert

11,000

Number of River Bend residents within a one-mile radius of the store, according to PolicyMap

25

Jobs already created, with more expected in the next few years

Profile: C Fresh Market

Des Moines, Iowa



C Fresh Market is a 23,000-square-foot supermarket located in River Bend — one of the oldest and most ethnically diverse communities in Des Moines, Iowa. The community had not had a full-service supermarket for almost 10 years when C Fresh opened in January of 2013. The store has been developing a diverse and loyal customer base ever since and offers a variety of affordable ethnic and international groceries to the surrounding population. The project received \$712,000 in loan financing from IFF, a nonprofit [community development financial institution](#) serving the Midwest region. The financing went toward the acquisition and renovation of the retail space. C Fresh was the first grocery store to open under IFF's Healthy Food Access Fund, made possible by the federal [Healthy Food Financing Initiative](#) (HFFI), which provides one-time grants and loans to healthy food retail projects opening in underserved communities nationwide. C Fresh is also the first HFFI-funded store to open in the state of Iowa.

IFF's [Healthy Food Access Fund](#) was created to help grocers succeed in underserved markets. Due to the relatively low profit margins inherent in the grocery retail business, the Fund provides affordable and flexible financing for owners, operators, and developers in both urban and rural areas. Independent grocers often cannot meet infrastructure costs and credit needs associated with conventional financial institutions. Since C Fresh is the first project financed by IFF's Healthy Food Access Fund, it proves to be an ideal example of a community business model that provides fresh food and helps to improve health in an underserved area,

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while supporting the community through engagement, and by hiring neighborhood residents, and offering nutrition education programs.

“C Fresh Market’s healthy foods will help foster healthier diets and a healthier community -- and we’re very proud to be supporting this wonderful new store ... As community education is integral to our HFFI program, C Fresh Market will help spread vital information about healthy eating habits throughout the community.”

Joe Neri, CEO of IFF

Prior to C Fresh Market, a Top Value grocery store was housed in the same building of this historic neighborhood in Des Moines. Top Value closed its doors in 2004, due to prices that were not affordable for many nearby residents and families, leaving the neighborhood with limited options to purchase healthy food in this densely populated urban area.

Fortunately, David Cotran and his father Simon Cotran of Davenport, Iowa, saw the opportunity to open a new supermarket in the Top Value location. The two businessmen strategized and developed a supermarket model that would serve the unique needs of the diverse neighborhood, and since opening, C Fresh’s customer base continues to grow. The grocery store offers a variety of goods that cater to different ethnicities, including Mexican, Indian, and Bosnian foods as well as African and East Asian products.

“We are incredibly excited to be a part of this community, providing healthy and diverse food options as well as employment in the heart of Des Moines ... We thank the community and partners who have stood by us and watched the store come to life, and we’ll look forward to serving this community.”

Simon Cotran, owner of C Fresh Market

C Fresh is a part of a larger development project that includes a jewelry store and a hair and nail salon at the same location. A business academy also is housed in the same building: the Evelyn K. Davis Center for Working Families provides business consulting services to the new owners as well as job training for new employees at the grocery store. The store’s workforce reflects the ethnic diversity of the neighborhood. As a result, C Fresh Market has become a hub for community activity.



For more information about the Healthy Food Access Portal, contact us at info@healthyfoodaccess.org.