
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

April 10, 2026

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Council legislation creates solutions to help retain fresh food, grocery and pharmacy access

In a major step toward strengthening food access, supporting local businesses, and addressing long-standing inequities in our neighborhoods, the Common Council this week approved a comprehensive series of actions (and \$2.8 million in funding) aimed at stabilizing and expanding grocery and pharmacy access across the city.

This coordinated effort brings together city leadership, community partners, the Mayor's Office, Milwaukee County, and grassroots food justice advocates to ensure residents in every neighborhood have access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food.

Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II, who is a key sponsor of the legislation and outspoken on the issue of residents' access to healthy foods, said he is optimistic that the files will help stem the tide of store closures.

"We see the legislation as attempting to create a lifeline for stores and a pathway for entrepreneurs who want to provide healthy and nutritious foods in neighborhoods that are currently underserved when it comes to grocery options," Alderman Stamper said.

Alderwoman Andrea M. Pratt said the community deserves better than having food-selling establishments close without notice. "My legislation would require 60 days' notice prior to a closure of a grocery or food business – giving the city the ability to make efforts to react with possible options and solutions," she said. "Our residents most certainly deserve that courtesy (of advanced notice)."

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Legislation boosted to retain fresh food, grocery access/ADD ONE

Aldерwoman Milele A. Coggs is the sponsor of legislation directing the Department of City Development and the Milwaukee Health Department to work directly to attract and retain grocery stores and pharmacies in the City of Milwaukee.

“Recent store closings have put tens of thousands of city residents in a tough spot when it comes to being able to access nutritious foods, and especially fresh fruits and vegetables,” Aldерwoman Coggs said. “Those residents who do not have access to transportation will not be able to easily get to the store to regularly get the groceries and items they depend on to stay healthy and well, and that is why we need to have city staff who are specifically dedicated to retaining existing and finding new grocery store operators.”

Aldерman DiAndre Jackson identified funds from the settlement of a major lawsuit, and directed those funds (\$1.8 million) to be used to help in the grocery/fresh food retention efforts.

At the **Steering and Rules Committee** on Monday, April 6, the following Council files were recommended for approval:

File #251662 - Resolution declaring food apartheid a public health emergency within the City of Milwaukee and directing the Milwaukee Health Department to treat the elimination of food apartheid as a core public health objective. Other City departments are directed to collaborate with the Milwaukee Health Department and Milwaukee County to address the issue, and the Milwaukee Health Department is directed to report back to the Common Council in 90 days to communicate the status of efforts intended to eliminate food apartheid in the City of Milwaukee. Full sponsor list: Aldерwoman Andrea M. Pratt, Aldерman Stamper, Aldерman DiAndre Jackson, Aldерman Mark Chambers, Jr., Aldерwoman Milele A. Coggs, Aldерman Robert Bauman, Aldерwoman Sharlen P. Moore, Aldерman Peter Burgelis, Aldерman Jose G. Perez, Aldерwoman Larresa Taylor, Aldерman Scott Spiker, and Aldерperson JoCasta Zamarripa.

File #251676 - Ordinance relating to notice of closure for food establishments. The file would require a 60-day notice to the city of an impending food establishment closure. The burden of notification of closure would be on the store’s management/ownership. Full sponsor list: Aldерwoman Andrea M. Pratt, Aldерman Stamper, Aldерman DiAndre Jackson, Aldерman Mark Chambers, Jr., Aldерwoman Milele A. Coggs, Aldерman Robert Bauman, Aldерwoman Sharlen P. Moore, Aldерman Peter Burgelis, Aldерman José G. Pérez, Aldерwoman Larresa Taylor, Aldерman Scott Spiker, and Aldерperson JoCasta Zamarripa.

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Legislation boosted to retain fresh food, grocery access/ADD TWO

At the **Community and Economic Development Committee** meeting yesterday (Thursday, April 9), the following Council files were recommended for approval:

File #251707 - Resolution directing the Department of City Development to work with the Milwaukee Health Department and any other relevant agencies to create strategies for the retention and attraction of full-service grocery stores and pharmacies. Full sponsor list: Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs, Alderman Stamper, Alderwoman Andrea M. Pratt, Alderman DiAndre Jackson, Alderman Mark Chambers, Jr., Alderman José G. Pérez, and Alderwoman Larresa Taylor.

File #251925 - Resolution allocating just over \$1 million from the Large Impact Development Fund to the Department of City Development Commercial Revitalization Grants Program for the purpose of a pilot grocery and pharmacy access program. Full sponsor list: Alderman Stamper, Alderwoman Andrea M. Pratt, Alderman DiAndre Jackson, Alderwoman Marina Dimitrijevic, and Alderwoman Sharlen P. Moore.

File #252110 - Resolution expending funds from the Grocery Store Retention Fund to support the activities of the Healthy Food Establishment Fund (promoting health food access). Full sponsor list: Alderman Stamper, Alderwoman Andrea M. Pratt, Alderman DiAndre Jackson, and Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs.

The files now go before the full Common Council at 9 a.m. on **Tuesday, April 21** in the third floor Council Chamber at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St. That meeting will be televised live on the City Channel (channel 25 on Spectrum Cable and channel 99 on AT&T U-Verse in the City of Milwaukee) and via streaming video on the city website at **city.milwaukee.gov/Channel25**.