

# **\$750,000 of \$1 million Dollar General settlement to go to food banks in Ohio's 88 counties**

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The bulk of a \$1 million payment earlier this year from Dollar General to settle allegations of deceptive pricing practices at its Ohio stores will be split among food banks and hunger relief organizations, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost announced on Thursday.

Since identifying all consumers affected by incidents of higher prices being charged at the register than posted on shelves, Yost announced during the County Auditors' Association of Ohio's Winter Conference in Columbus that \$750,00 of the settlement would be split among food banks and hunger relief organizations within the state's 88 counties.

The goal, he said, was to bring some monetary restitution for the deceptive pricing practices that Yost alleged in a lawsuit that the Tennessee-based discount retail giant engaged in. Under the settlement, however, Dollar General denies any wrongdoing.

Yost told auditors that every county will receive at least \$1,000, and county auditors will decide what organizations will receive funds and notify Yost's office by Nov. 30. The remainder of the \$750,000 will be distributed depending on how many Dollar General stores are within a specific county, Yost said.

Wyandot County Auditor George Kitzler, the incoming president of the County Auditors' Association, thanked Yost for "earmarking food banks as the beneficiaries and for empowering my colleagues and me to decide where best to direct the money within our counties."

"The food bank assistance is well-timed, as the holiday season is quickly approaching," Kitzler noted.

The remaining \$250,000 is being retained by Yost to cover the costs of the investigation and litigation against Dollar General.

In addition to the monetary relief, the settlement requires that Dollar General:

- Ensure that items are rung up at the correct price at the register

- Make sure that district managers conduct random price checks every 45 days
- Make stores that receive 3 failed auditor reports within 6 months complete a full-store assessment and check the price of every item in the store
- Educate all employees about the policy and post signs in its Ohio stores informing customers of the same.

Yost filed the lawsuit against Dollar General last year after reports and tests out of Butler County revealed that 20 Dollar General stores within the county had overcharge error rates ranging from 16.7% to 88.2%.

The attorney general also reported receiving a dozen complaints about similar bait advertising and deceptive practices by Dollar General between March 2021 and August 2022 from consumers in Franklin, Cuyahoga, Highland, Lucas, Madison, Richland, Summit and Trumbull counties.

In 2019, Dollar General settled a similar consumer protection act case in Vermont for \$1.75 million for overcharging customers. Inspectors in that state warned the chain more than 50 times about price inaccuracies at the 36 stores in that state.