



FOOD for EVERY CHILD

THE NEED FOR MORE HEALTHY FOOD RETAIL IN LOUISVILLE



There are too few supermarkets and healthy food resources in many Louisville communities.

The situation is pressing: **Residents in these communities suffer from disproportionately high rates of obesity, diabetes and other diet-related diseases.** They are also cut off from the quality jobs and economic revitalization that a local grocery store provides. The situation is particularly distressing because 1 in 7 Louisvillians live in concentrated poverty—the 15th worst rate among 17 peer cities.¹ Maps compiled by the The Food Trust, a nationally recognized nonprofit, found that **many Louisville communities have no supermarkets**, leaving residents to travel outside their neighborhood to do their shopping, or pay higher prices for food at area convenience stores.

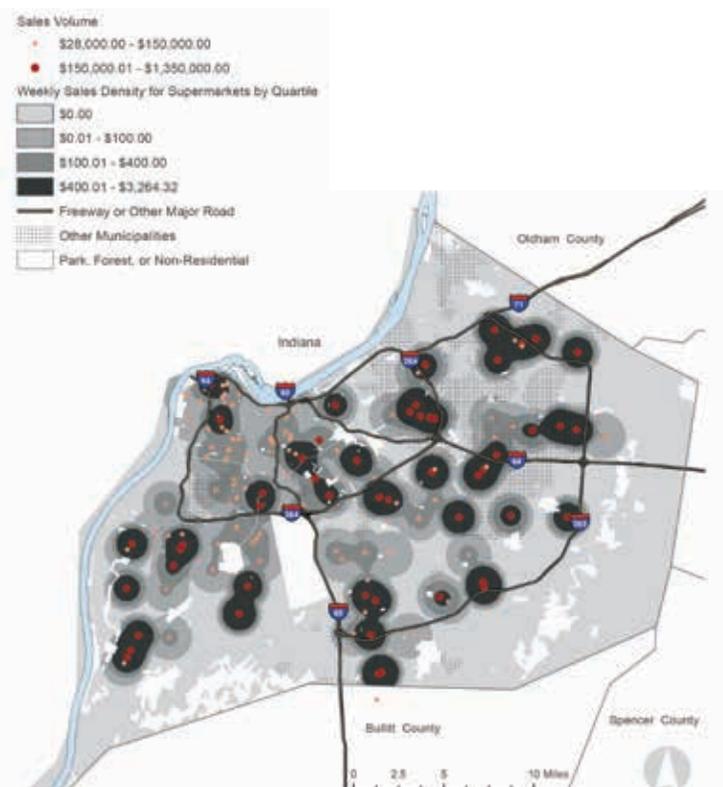
Louisville has been ranked the least healthy metropolitan area in America by the American College of Sports Medicine, because of its high rates of heart disease and diabetes.² And Kentucky's 18.5% rate of obesity among high school students is the third worst in the country.³ Lower-income residents in Louisville are likely to suffer from obesity and other diet-related health problems at rates significantly higher than those of the population as a whole.

Through mapping,⁴ this report, *Food for Every Child: The Need for More Supermarkets in Louisville* outlines the extent and implications of the grocery shortage in Louisville by identifying the gaps in food availability and the relationship between grocery access, diet-related diseases and neighborhood income levels.

Key findings include:

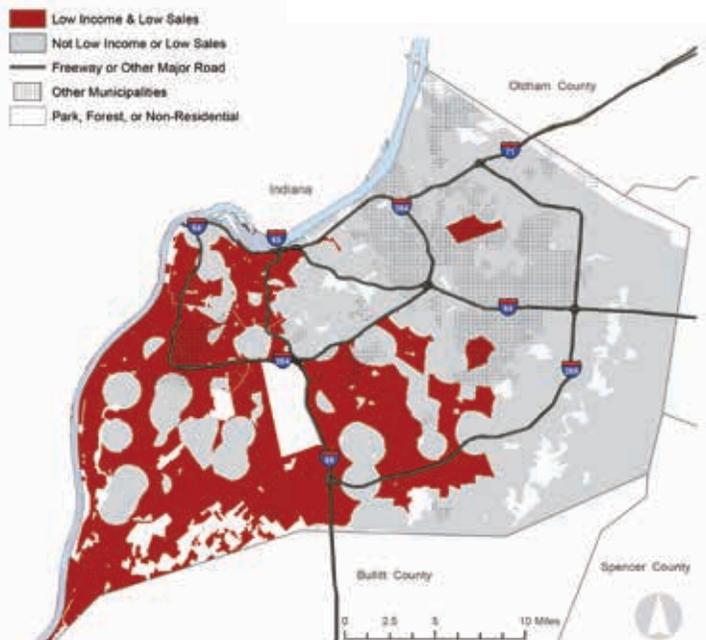
- **Access to nutritious food is unevenly distributed in Louisville.** There are large areas of the city with few full-service grocery stores, and many neighborhoods where none exist.
- This uneven distribution of supermarkets in Louisville leaves a disproportionate number of lower-income people without access to nutritious food. **Over 185,000 Louisville residents live in lower-income areas with limited access to a local grocery store.** Underserved communities can be found across the city, including large sections of West Louisville, Southwest Jefferson County, and the I-65 corridor.
- There is a connection between diet-related disease and healthy food access. **Many lower-income communities in Louisville have both poor food access and high rates of diet-related deaths.** Public health experts, including the Institute of Medicine and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, agree that bringing supermarkets and other stores selling high-quality, healthy and affordable foods to underserved communities is a key component in reducing rates of childhood obesity.
- **Grocery stores are critical to the health and economic development of neighborhoods.** Healthy food retail sparks economic revitalization and brings jobs to areas that need them most.

Weekly Sales Volume in Louisville



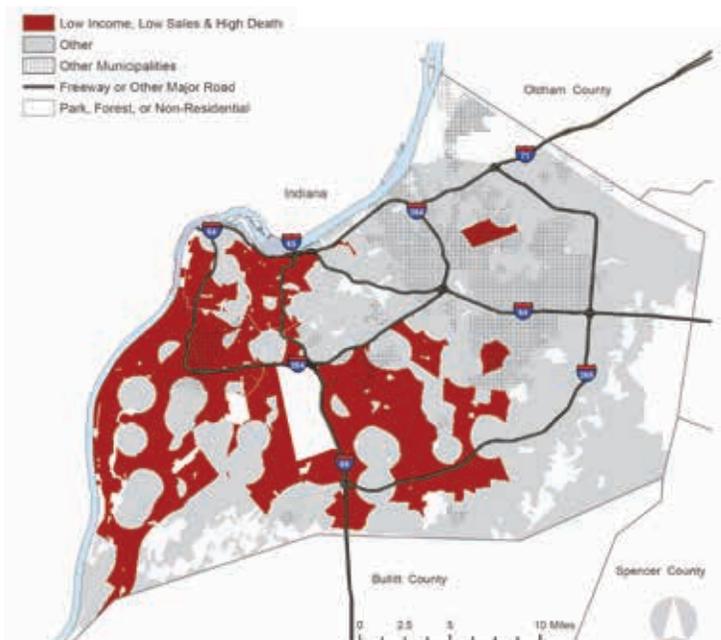
Weekly Sales Volume for Supermarkets shows the location of 135 stores in Louisville and the weekly sales volume at each store. The smaller red circles represent lower weekly sales volume; the larger red circles represent higher weekly sales volume. The gray shading shows how supermarket sales are distributed. The darkest areas have the highest concentration of supermarket sales, whereas the light areas have the lowest sales, indicating that few or no supermarkets are located there. This map finds that access to nutritious food is unevenly distributed in Louisville. There are large areas of the city with few full-service grocery stores, and many neighborhoods where none exist.

Low Supermarket Sales and Low Income in Louisville



Low Supermarket Sales and Low Income highlights areas with low levels of supermarket sales because there are few to no stores located there. In these communities, which are also low income, families face more difficulty traveling to the areas where supermarkets are concentrated, especially when public transit is not accessible or convenient. In Louisville, underserved communities are concentrated in West Louisville, Southwest Jefferson County, and the I-65 corridor. Over 185,000 Louisville residents—more than 25% of the total population—live in lower-income areas underserved by supermarkets.

Areas with the Greatest Need in Louisville



Areas with Greatest Need displays lower income communities where there are low supermarket sales and a high number of deaths due to diet-related disease in Louisville. These areas have the greatest need for more supermarkets and other fresh food retail venues. Many Louisville communities without grocery stores have high rates of diet-related disease.

HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING: IMPROVING HEALTH, CREATING JOBS

The lack of access to grocery stores in Louisville is rooted in larger patterns of disinvestment in urban communities, redlining, and white flight during the 1960s, when many independent and chain grocery stores followed their existing customers to the suburbs. Louisville is one of many cities across the country with low levels of supermarket access in its distressed communities. To address the problem, other cities and states have developed healthy food financing initiatives (HFFIs), which are a viable, effective, and economically sustainable solution to the problem of limited access to healthy foods: To overcome the high cost and risk associated with development in underserved areas, grocers and other healthy food retailers need public sector support. **HFFIs spur investment in underserved communities** by providing flexible loan and grant financing for the development of supermarkets, corner stores, farmers markets, co-ops, mobile markets and other healthy food businesses. These one-time resources help grocers overcome the higher initial barriers to entry into underserved urban and rural communities, and support renovation and expansion of existing stores so they can provide the healthy foods and quality jobs that communities want and need.

This innovative model was first established in Pennsylvania with the state's Fresh Food Financing Initiative in 2004. This public-private partnership, seeded with \$30 million from the state's Department of Community and Economic Development, was designed to accommodate the diverse financing needs of large supermarkets, family-owned grocery stores, farmers markets and other healthy food retailers, whether located in cities, small towns or rural communities. **The program has had a tremendous impact** in Pennsylvania, supporting 88 fresh food retail projects across the state, creating or retaining more than 5,000 jobs, and improving access to healthy foods for over 400,000 state residents.

The success of this model has influenced the design and creation of similar programs in several states, including Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, and New Jersey, and **several cities, including Austin, Houston and New Orleans**. And momentum is growing for comparable programs in nearly a dozen places, **including the cities of El Paso and Dallas**, and the state of Massachusetts. Additionally, a federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative has been established by the U.S. Departments of Treasury, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services. Since launching in 2010, more than \$500 million in competitive grants and loans as well as New Markets Tax Credits has been awarded to community development organizations across the country to disseminate to fresh food retail projects in their regions. Across the country, these initiatives are improving health and revitalizing communities through investment in healthy food retail.

Healthy Food Financing: By the Numbers

- In New York, the Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund has created or preserved over **1,000 jobs**
- In New Orleans, the Fresh Food Retailer Initiative supported **6 projects** that serve **70,000 people**, and created almost **300 jobs**
- In Pennsylvania, the Fresh Food Financing Initiative has supported **88 projects**, creating or retaining **5,000 jobs**
- In Pittsburgh, research on the community surrounding an HFFI funded store found an **11.8% decline** in food insecurity, **9.6% fewer new diagnoses** of high cholesterol, and a **3.6% reduction** in the increase of the prevalence of diabetes⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS

Louisville must address the critical need for more supermarkets in many communities. The number of supermarkets—and access to them—are key factors contributing to the health and economic development of neighborhoods. People living in lower-income areas without access to supermarkets suffer from diet-related deaths at a rate higher than that experienced by the population as a whole. **Through public investment, we can increase the number of supermarkets in underserved communities and improve the health of children and families across the state.**

We recommend that Louisville convene leaders from the supermarket industry, government, public health, economic development and civic sectors to develop a strategy to establish more supermarkets in lower-income communities. A key element of this strategy is for the public sector to develop a healthy food financing initiative that can provide grants and loans to support local supermarket development projects in order to increase the availability of affordable and nutritious food in underserved areas.



ENDNOTES

- ¹ http://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/content/uploads/2016/11/Final-PDF_GLP-2015-Poverty-Report.pdf
- ² <http://americanfitnessindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ACSM-AFI-Report-2017.pdf>
- ³ <https://stateofobesity.org/states/ky>
- ⁴ http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/20171208-gis-methodology-louisville.original.pdf
- ⁵ [http://www.annalsofepidemiology.org/article/S1047-2797\(17\)30293-4/abstract](http://www.annalsofepidemiology.org/article/S1047-2797(17)30293-4/abstract)

The Food Trust

Ensuring That Everyone Has Access To Affordable, Nutritious Food

For more than 25 years, The Food Trust has been working to ensure that everyone has access to affordable, nutritious food and information to make healthy decisions.

The Food Trust's comprehensive approach includes improving food environments and teaching nutrition education in schools; working with corner store owners to increase healthy offerings and helping customers make healthier choices; managing farmers markets in communities that lack access to affordable produce; and encouraging grocery store development in underserved communities.

Learn more about The Food Trust:
www.thefoodtrust.org

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