

Without access to healthy foods, too many children are left asking: WHAT'S IN STORE FOR US?

Going to the grocery store is something a lot of people take for granted. But for 29.7 million Americans who live in food desertsⁱ—areas where it is difficult to buy fresh food—that trip to the grocery store is more of a dream. Low-income zip codes have 25 percent fewer chain supermarkets than middle-income zip codes.ⁱⁱ The result? Access to fresh produce, dairy and other staples is extremely tough at best, and simply not an option for far too many. The lack of nutritious food can lead to obesity, disease and a lifetime of trouble.ⁱⁱⁱ

We can eliminate food deserts by learning the facts and taking action.

- 29.7 million Americans across the United States are in food deserts, according to the US Department of Agriculture.^{iv}
- Nationally, low-income areas have significantly more convenience stores^v and far fewer supermarkets, limiting healthy options for our children and families.^{vi}
- Proximity to neighborhood supermarkets is associated with healthier living and lower body weight, as found in several large cross sectional studies.^{vii, viii, ix, x, xi, xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii}
- We must help our state's families get better access to healthy choices like fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy, whole grains, seafood and lean meats.^{xviii}
- Healthy food financing is the answer. It's a policy initiative that helps put healthy foods in all communities.^{xix, xx}
- Healthy food financing can have huge benefits. The Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative increased access to healthy foods for over 400,000 Pennsylvania residents and created thousands of direct and indirect jobs.^{xxi}

America deserves to have access to affordable fresh foods. Healthy food financing programs can make the difference.

29.7 million Americans don't have stores that offer healthy foods in their community.^{xxii} We can't expect our children to grow up healthy and strong if they can't get access to healthy, affordable, nutritious foods.^{xxiii}

SOURCES

- ⁱ U.S. Department of Agriculture. Economic Research Service. *Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food: Updated Estimates of Distance to Supermarkets Using 2010 Data*. USDA, 2012. Web. 15 Oct. 2013. <<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err143.aspx>>.
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- ⁱⁱⁱ "Creating Access to Healthy, Affordable Food: Food Deserts." U.S. Department of Agriculture. Web. 15 Oct. 2013. <<http://apps.ams.usda.gov/fooddeserts/foodDeserts.aspx>>.
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