

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

Going to the grocery store is something most of us 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 grocery store is anything but easy. Low-income zip codes have 25 percent fewer chain supermarkets compared to middle-income zip codes.ⁱⁱ The result? Access to fresh produce, dairy and other staples is very tough at best, and simply not an option for far too many. That results in higher rates of obesity and preventable health complications and diseases.ⁱⁱⁱ

The facts may surprise you:

- 29.7 million Americans across the United States are in food deserts, according to the US Department of Agriculture.^{iv}
- Greater accessibility to neighborhood supermarkets is associated with healthier living and lower body weight, as found in several large cross sectional studies.^{v,vi,vii,viii,ix,x,xi,xii,xiii,xiv,xv}
- Low-income neighborhoods have 50 percent fewer supermarkets than the wealthiest neighborhoods.^{xvi}
- We need a statewide program to bring supermarkets to our rural and urban communities to provide more access to fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy, whole grains, seafood, and lean meats.^{xvii}
- Healthy food financing is the answer. It's a policy initiative that helps put healthy foods in all communities.^{xviii,xix}
- And there's evidence that it can have huge benefits: the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI), created 5,000 direct jobs, and resulted in \$190 million in total investment due to the state's \$30 million of seed funding.^{xx}
- But not only that, **it increased access to healthy food for over 400,000 people.**^{xxi}

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

DID YOU KNOW: A single supermarket can create as many as 250 new jobs for local residents.^{xxii-xxiii-xxiv} We can increase access to healthier foods, create jobs and improve health by creating a healthy food financing initiative.

SOURCES

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