



STIMULATING
**GROCERY
RETAIL**
DEVELOPMENT
IN MISSISSIPPI

*A report of the
Mississippi Grocery Access
Task Force*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was prepared by Julia Koprak and Brian Lang at The Food Trust; it was released December 2012. Members of the Mississippi Grocery Access Task Force, co-chaired by Dr. John E. Hall and Jeff Olson, provided valuable input. Support for this report was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Cover photo by Ryan Donnell.

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Mississippi Grocery Access Task Force

Dear Neighbors,

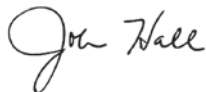
As co-chairs of the Mississippi Grocery Access Task Force, we are honored to present this report outlining our task force's recommendations for developing healthy, affordable food retail in underserved areas throughout Mississippi.

Obesity rates in the United States have increased dramatically over the last few decades, with Mississippi leading the trend. The rate of adult obesity in the state is 34.9 percent and is on track to grow to 66 percent by 2030. In addition to the impact on health, obesity causes a huge economic burden on the state's health care costs: in 2008, Mississippi spent \$925 million in health care costs directly related to obesity, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention projects that this will rise to \$3.9 billion per year by 2018 if current trends continue. On the other hand, a mere 5 percent reduction in the state's average body mass index (BMI)—a useful measure of overweight and obesity—could save Mississippi \$6 billion over the next 20 years. In many rural and urban areas, a lack of access to fresh food complicates efforts to maintain a nutritious diet, which can contribute to diet-related diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease. If we are serious about reducing rates of obesity and the amount of money spent on the epidemic in Mississippi, we should improve people's access to healthy foods. Many of these same communities have the highest levels of unemployment in the state. Increasing fresh food retail in underserved communities will also stimulate local economic development. Expanded grocery retail has the added benefit of creating or retaining hundreds, if not thousands, of quality jobs.

In an effort to explore barriers to grocery store development in communities throughout the state, nearly 50 experts, representing public health, food retail, economic development, government and civic organizations, met throughout the year and identified nine policy recommendations to drive change at both the state and local levels. We are thankful for the dedicated energy of this group, which blended a variety of diverse perspectives to create realistic and effective solutions. We also would like to extend our gratitude to the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi, the National Grocers Association and The Food Trust for convening our partnership and to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for their support.

Every community deserves to have convenient access to high-quality, affordable and nutritious food. We look forward to bringing these policies to fruition and supporting the expansion of healthy food retail across Mississippi. Implementing the recommendations outlined in this report will require committed, broad-based leadership to work with existing retailers and attract new grocery stores. Together, we can make healthy, affordable food available for all children and families in Mississippi.

Sincerely,



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INTRODUCTION

Mississippi has too few grocery stores in many of its communities. This shortage of grocery stores in both urban and rural areas means that residents, particularly those in lower-income communities, face much greater challenges finding fresh produce and other foods necessary to maintain a healthy diet.

A significant body of research has indicated that people who live in communities without a supermarket suffer from disproportionately high rates of obesity, diabetes and other diet-related health problems. In Mississippi, more than one out of every four residents lives in a community with limited access to a local supermarket. Other research has shown that rural counties in the Mississippi Delta average only one supermarket per 190 square miles, with most low-income residents traveling more than 30 miles to access affordable food in larger groceries and supermarkets. At the same time, rates of obesity, diabetes and other diet-related disease in Mississippi are among the highest in the United States. Nearly 35 percent of Mississippi's adults and 22 percent of Mississippi's children are obese, and these rates are expected to double by 2030.

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 critical to the success of any effort to help people eat better and lead healthier lives. Healthier people will reduce health care costs in the state. This situation is pressing: Mississippi spends nearly \$1 billion each year treating obesity-related diseases.

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To address these concerns, The Food Trust, a nationally recognized nonprofit organization, issued *Food for Every Child: The Need for More Supermarkets in Mississippi* in early 2012. Using mapping technology to identify underserved communities across the state, *Food for Every Child* highlights the gaps in food availability and the relationship between supermarket access, diet-related diseases and neighborhood income levels. The report led to the creation of a task force of key stakeholders focused on increasing access to healthy, affordable foods for residents in underserved areas.

The Mississippi Grocery Access Task Force, convened by The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi, National Grocers Association and The Food Trust, is a public-private partnership of leaders from the grocery industry and economic development, public health and civic sectors. The task force members explored the barriers

continued on next page



facing grocers in underserved areas and present nine recommendations to the State of Mississippi and to local governments throughout the state. These recommendations call upon state and local governments to

Supermarkets and grocery stores bring quality jobs and serve as economic anchors.

prioritize access to grocery stores and other retailers selling high-quality, healthy and affordable foods for families and children in Mississippi who reside in underserved communities.

While grocery stores alone will not solve the obesity epidemic facing our state, the majority of research shows a clear relationship between healthy food access, diet and obesity. In addition to the health benefits, supermarkets and grocery stores spark economic development. Supermarkets not only

employ people in stores but also create new jobs in site construction and food distribution. Stores serve as economic anchors and spur additional retail and other development in a community.

The Mississippi Grocery Access Task Force recognizes that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to the problem of food access in our communities. Food retail projects can take on myriad different forms, including new supermarket developments, expansion or renovation of existing grocery stores and alternative models such as farmers' markets, healthy convenience stores, co-ops and mobile markets. These efforts can also support complementary initiatives, including Delta Fresh Foods and the Mississippi Food Policy Council, to expand the local food system, promote the sale of healthy foods and improve nutrition through educational programs.

States and cities across the country have implemented similar recommendations by providing financial and civic support to healthy food retail programs. Successful financing programs in states such as Pennsylvania, Louisiana, Illinois and New York, among others, and the Healthy Food Financing Initiative at the federal level have included the strategic investment of public funds to reduce the risks associated with the development and expansion of grocery stores in lower-income communities. In today's challenging fiscal climate, the success of efforts to improve healthy food access will depend on coordinated action from state government agencies, community development organizations, charitable foundations, the supermarket industry and others.

Mississippi Grocery Access Task Force members and The Food Trust are committed to working with state and local governments to implement these nine policy recommendations for children and families in Mississippi who deserve the opportunity to lead healthier lives.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mississippi Grocery Access Task Force—a public-private partnership of leaders from the grocery industry and economic development, public health and civic sectors—came together to call upon the State of Mississippi to bring healthy food retailing to families throughout the state. We present the following recommendations for action to state and local governments in Mississippi. Continued success will depend on coordinated action from a broad range of partners including government agencies, community development entities, public health organizations, the grocery industry and others. The Mississippi Grocery Access Task Force will create an advisory group of leaders to guide the implementation of these recommendations.

- 1 Economic development programs should be made available and aggressively marketed to grocery stores and other retailers selling healthy food in underserved areas.
- 2 The State of Mississippi should develop a grant and loan program that supports the development, renovation and expansion of grocery stores and other retailers selling healthy food in underserved areas. Mississippi should seek to leverage seed capital from the state with additional public and private investment.
- 3 The State of Mississippi should expedite the transition from distribution centers to retailers for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Additionally, Mississippi should implement an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system for its WIC program.
- 4 State government should expand the distribution schedule for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to disburse benefits more evenly throughout the month.
- 5 State and local government, nonprofit organizations and educational institutions should target workforce development programs that would: 1) create and retain jobs and 2) support the needs of grocery stores and other retailers selling healthy food.
- 6 State and local governments should reduce regulatory barriers to grocery store development in underserved areas.
- 7 State and local governments, in partnership with supermarket operators, should work with public and private partners to develop safe, affordable and convenient transportation for shoppers who do not have access to a supermarket.
- 8 State and local governments should collaborate with grocers and community groups to empower entrepreneurs and pursue distribution strategies to ensure that rural areas have convenient access to healthy, affordable food.
- 9 State and local government should work with grocers, developers, law enforcement and the community to help ensure a safe and secure environment for both customers and store personnel.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Economic development programs should be made available and aggressively marketed to grocery stores and other retailers selling healthy food in underserved areas.

The food retail industry needs public sector support to overcome the high costs and risks of new store development in underserved areas. However, few incentives from the State of Mississippi are available to retailers. Business tools, such as sales tax abatements on equipment purchases, property tax abatements, tax exempt financing bonds and low-cost financing, can encourage supermarkets to invest in underserved areas. These incentives should be made available and aggressively marketed to grocers to encourage the construction and renovation of new and existing healthy food retail outlets throughout Mississippi. However, while certain public incentives can encourage supermarket development in targeted areas and help close the financing gap, a comprehensive program is needed to stimulate supermarket development in communities throughout Mississippi.

Success Stories

Kentucky: A combination of city loans, federal grants and tax credit financing helped to bring First Choice Market to the Park DuValle neighborhood in southwest Louisville. The \$4.4 million project included a \$3.2 million loan from the city, funded with Community Development Block Grant Recovery (CDBG-R) funds, two \$100,000 city loans, \$35,000 for infrastructure improvements from a local councilmember and a nearly \$1.2 million New Markets Tax Credit equity

commitment by local banks. First Choice Market, an independently operated grocery store, opened in 2012, creating more than 150 construction jobs and 40 permanent jobs and bringing fresh fruits and vegetables to a neighborhood that had been without a full-service supermarket for over a decade. By utilizing a variety of economic development tools, the city was able to meet a key priority in the city's redevelopment plan.

Louisiana: Winnsboro is a hurricane-impacted community that has had persistently high rates of poverty and unemployment. With the help of a \$5 million United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Guaranteed Loan, the city was able to attract an experienced grocer to fill a gap on Winnsboro's south side, which had been deemed a food desert by the USDA. Ford's Fine Foods, a 19,500-square-foot, full-service grocery store, opened in early 2012. The new store is accessible to outlying rural communities and small towns and has created or retained over 100 jobs in the Delta Region parish.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

The State of Mississippi should develop a grant and loan program that supports the development, renovation and expansion of grocery stores and other retailers selling healthy food in underserved areas. Mississippi should seek to leverage seed capital from the state with additional public and private investment.

This grant and loan program could support workforce training, offset development and construction costs and fund soft costs including feasibility and market studies. The program should be flexible enough to meet the needs of any retailer with a robust offering of healthy food, including a variety of fruits and vegetables, dairy, meat and other groceries intended for home preparation.

State partnerships with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) have proven to be a successful model for the creation of statewide financing initiatives to improve healthy food retail access to underserved communities. CDFIs have the knowledge and capacity to leverage state funds, thus greatly expanding the impact of the state's investment in these programs. The public-private partnership can also include civic organizations that can ensure that funding is directed to areas of need and conduct outreach and evaluation.

Success Stories

Pennsylvania: In 2004, Pennsylvania created the nation's first statewide program to address the lack of fresh food availability in its communities: the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI). The Reinvestment Fund, a CDFI, used the state's \$30 million capital to leverage an additional \$146 million in other sources of public and private capital. The Food Trust partnered with The Reinvestment Fund to co-administer the initiative. Since its launch, the initiative has approved nearly 90 new and expanded fresh food retail projects across the state for funding. The Fresh Food Financing Initiative has created or retained over 5,000 jobs and increased access for an estimated 500,000 people. The success of FFFI in Pennsylvania influenced the creation and design of similar initiatives in New York, New Orleans, California, New Jersey and Illinois.

Louisiana: Along the Gulf Coast, the flooding and damage caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 resulted in the closure of many supermarkets. In New Orleans, the availability of fresh produce was already limited prior to the storm, and the situation deteriorated afterwards. Without convenient access to a nearby supermarket, many residents relied on convenience stores that carried little, if any, fresh produce. In 2011, the City of New Orleans launched the Fresh Food Retailer Initiative (FFRI), seeded with \$7 million dollars of Disaster Community Development Block Grants (D-CDBG). Hope Enterprise Corporation (HOPE) and The Food Trust were contracted by the city to manage the program. HOPE has matched the city's pledge, creating a \$14 million financing platform for FFRI to assist healthy food retailers. Since the launch, the program has funded a new small grocery, DaFresh Seafood and Produce Store, and the planned 2013 re-opening of the iconic Circle Food Store.

***See appendix for additional information on healthy food financing programs around the country.*

RECOMMENDATION 3:

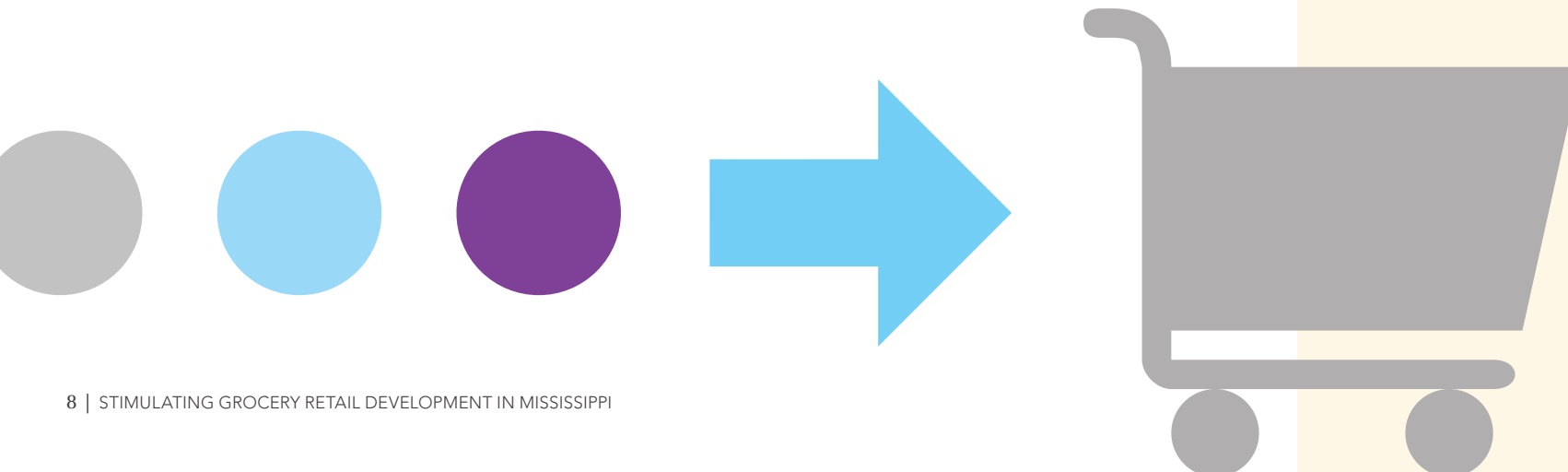
The State of Mississippi should expedite the transition from distribution centers to retailers for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Additionally, Mississippi should implement an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system for its WIC program.

Mississippi is the only state in the country that continues to use a direct distribution food delivery system for its WIC program, which comprises upwards of \$60 million in food benefits annually. The current system presents numerous obstacles for both WIC participants and state administrators, such as limited choices, inconvenient access and high operating costs. These challenges could be alleviated by transitioning to a retail distribution system.

The federal government has mandated that all states switch to WIC EBT by 2020, and Mississippi agencies are currently working on the implementation of WIC EBT in conjunction with a switch to a retail distribution system. Task force members are committed to working with the Department of Health to expedite this transition, especially because WIC dollars can be a key source of revenue for grocery operators in underserved areas.

In 2011, the Harvard Law School Mississippi Delta Project released *Mississippi WIC for the 21st Century*, a report that highlighted the numerous benefits of moving to retail food delivery distribution. According to the report, a retail system would:

- Provide more flexibility and convenience for participants who have limited transportation resources
- Offer participants higher quality and greater variety in the nutritious foods they receive
- Stimulate growth and opportunity for grocers, who would receive a steady and substantial stream of revenue through WIC spending
- Improve access to healthy foods for rural and low-income non-WIC Mississippians because small grocers across the state would have the financial incentive (and under WIC guidelines would be required) to stock nutritious WIC-approved foods
- Be more efficient and cost-effective for the State of Mississippi, decreasing the administrative burdens of running the warehouses as well as decreasing the state's cost per person.



RECOMMENDATION 4:

State government should expand the distribution schedule for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to disburse benefits more evenly throughout the month.

When SNAP benefits are dispersed unevenly throughout the month, food retail stores experience a surge of business at the time of distribution—often at the beginning of the month—that produces numerous unintended consequences. Long lines at checkout, overcrowding and issues with adequate product supply and staffing make it difficult for some retailers to operate in communities with heavy SNAP participation and can create an unpleasant shopping experience for customers.



Success Stories

Southeast Region: In both Georgia and Tennessee, efforts of key stakeholders have led to the overhaul of each states' SNAP distribution schedules. In September 2012, Georgia's SNAP distribution schedule was extended from a 10-day cycle to a 19-day cycle, and in

October 2012, Tennessee's SNAP distribution schedule was extended from a 10-day cycle to a 20-day cycle, thereby improving the effectiveness of both programs. This change will not only benefit SNAP participants, but also grocers, wholesalers and suppliers. This new distribution schedule for SNAP benefits helps ensure

that fresh foods are available throughout the month and that grocery stores with a high percentage of customers utilizing SNAP benefits can properly serve all of their customers.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

State and local government, nonprofit organizations and educational institutions should target workforce development programs that would: 1) create and retain jobs and 2) support the needs of grocery stores and other retailers selling healthy food.

The supermarket industry cites the lack of an available workforce as a barrier to supermarket and grocery store development. Industry leaders are cognizant of the value of their labor force and the need to educate that workforce appropriately, especially for more complex and highly skilled jobs such as meat cutting, produce preparation and merchandising, deli-bakery preparation and merchandising, back door receiving, scanning, pricing and management. Most employees that enter the retail grocery business and make their way to one of the more complex duties remain in the business their entire careers. The job pool of experienced workers is small and the grocery industry is constantly looking to hire experienced personnel. While some training programs have been developed and implemented to train potential employees for these important roles, few have been maintained beyond the opening of a specific new business. Workforce development programs in Mississippi could be better coordinated and targeted for grocery retail.

Success Stories

Mississippi: Roberts Company Inc., headquartered in Hattiesburg, partnered with Jones Junior College in Ellisville on a retail meat management training class. Roberts Company meat supervisors provided the instruction for the class, which offered instruction on cutting techniques and basic market management principles. Several of the students found jobs in local supermarkets armed with a skill set that is in very short supply in the grocery industry. These students have an opportunity to earn wages and benefits that are above average once they acquire some experience to go along with their education. The partnership between business and academia that exists between the two organizations can be considered a model for other junior colleges around the state.

Mississippi: From 2009 to 2011, the Mississippi Department of Human Services and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security partnered to implement the Mississippi Subsidized Transitional Employment Program and Services (STEPS) Program. Using Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds for operational costs, Mississippi STEPS provided a wage and benefit subsidy to employers who provided an hourly wage and a transferable work skill to eligible participants. While this was a temporary program, if renewed this program could be targeted for potential grocery store employees.

Pennsylvania: Uplift Solutions chairman Jeff Brown successfully operates stores in several of Philadelphia's distressed neighborhoods. Brown's workforce development model prioritizes hiring employees from

the nearby community and considering ex-offenders for hiring and training. Grant and loan assistance from the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative helped to offset the higher costs associated with Brown's intensive training model, allowing the Brown's ShopRite of Island Avenue to open its doors in 2005. The 57,000-square-foot supermarket has brought 258 quality jobs to the area and employs a number of local residents from the predominantly African American and West African community. Brown partnered with a local workforce development agency to develop a customized training program for the Island Avenue ShopRite and five other stores. This program improves staff retention and sets employees on the path for long-term success within the grocery industry.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

State and local governments should reduce regulatory barriers to grocery store development in underserved areas.

State and local government approval processes can add several years and substantial costs to a supermarket project in an underserved area. Regulation is important for public health and safety purposes but could be streamlined for supermarket operators without sacrificing the integrity of the process. Government can show preference to development it hopes to encourage by expediting approval processes, thereby reducing project costs. Creating a single point of access for interacting with government would help supermarket operators navigate the complex process of developing supermarkets in underserved communities. Regulatory and permitting codes should be reviewed and amended to reduce the length of time it takes to develop a supermarket.

Success Stories

Illinois: The City of Chicago has made fresh food retail a priority by making the development process for new food retailers more streamlined and less burdensome. The city has designated a single agency, called Shop Chicago, to address the multiple concerns of potential retailers and to coordinate the development process for projects. Shop Chicago's programs simplify the approval process and identify ways to facilitate land assembly, among many other proactive measures. As a result, the Shop Chicago program has successfully attracted new grocery stores to underserved neighborhoods.

California: The Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles developed an incentive package to attract new food retailers to neighborhoods in South Los Angeles that were underserved by grocery retailers. Recognizing regulatory hurdles to the development of new stores, the Los Angeles City Planning Department and Department of Building Services offered an expedited plan review to new stores. Since its inception, the program has been successful in attracting three new grocers to the Los Angeles area.



RECOMMENDATION 7:

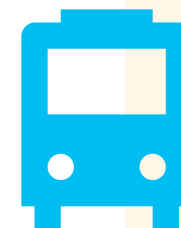
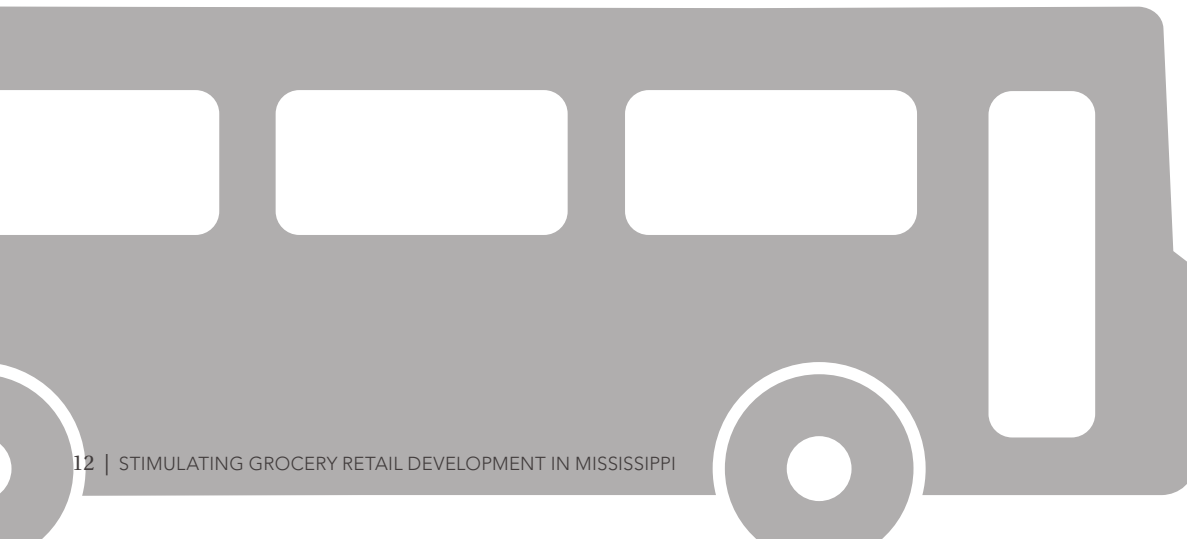
State and local governments, in partnership with supermarket operators, should work with public and private partners to develop safe, affordable and convenient transportation for shoppers who do not have access to a supermarket.

Comprehensive transportation policy should plan for ways to transport area residents to nearby grocery stores. Lower-income households are less likely than other households to own a car and less likely to live in a neighborhood with a supermarket. The transportation barrier is of particular concern to Mississippi's rural residents, who often travel long distances to stores. In urban areas, many lower-income families, as well as the elderly, disabled and other public transit-dependent consumers, have to take multiple bus rides to access the nearest supermarket. Lack of convenient and affordable transportation makes it difficult for these shoppers to purchase fresh, healthy foods. Regional and state transportation agencies in Mississippi should recognize when there is a need for better services and create efficient ways to transport shoppers to full-service grocery stores. In addition, civic leaders in rural areas should consider repurposing publicly owned vehicles to use as grocery shuttles.

Success Stories

Massachusetts: Neighborhood shuttles represent a short-term strategy to address the problem of poor food access. In Springfield, community members, public officials and store management developed a free, once-a-week shuttle service in an effort to ensure that the one supermarket serving 26,000 people did not close.

Tennessee: In Nashville, the Metropolitan Planning Organization's 25-year Regional Transportation Plan included a staff analysis of how roadways in the Nashville area can better connect residents to food retailers. The analysis used overlay maps to identify lower-income, minority and predominantly elderly neighborhoods that would benefit from public transportation routes that provide better access to food retailers. The Metropolitan Planning Organization used the analysis of food environments and community populations when ranking and funding transportation projects as one part of a comprehensive approach to promote the health and wellness of residents in the Nashville area.



RECOMMENDATION 8:

State and local governments should collaborate with grocers and community groups to empower entrepreneurs and pursue distribution strategies to ensure that rural areas have convenient access to healthy, affordable food.

Rural grocery stores are critical to sustaining small-town America. Store closings can cause economic distress and a loss of access to fresh food. Among the obstacles for small rural grocery stores in low-population areas is the lack of buying power to purchase fresh items from regional wholesalers, whose high transportation costs are an additional restriction in their ability to supply small stores. In such cases, alternative distribution strategies may be necessary. Policymakers and civic leaders should consider incentives to support alternative distribution strategies for healthy food and develop innovative store models suited to sparsely populated areas. For example, local governments can offer grocers publicly owned property at a low or minimal cost to help cover the expenses of opening new stores. In addition, food retail projects can take on a variety of formats and sizes and there is no one-size-fits-all solution: alternative models including co-ops, mobile vendors and small retail operations such as healthy convenience stores can help meet the fresh food needs of underserved communities in rural areas. While efforts are underway at the local level and around the country, more research and technical assistance are needed to identify and promote successful strategies for providing healthy and affordable foods in Mississippi's rural communities.



Success Stories

Increasing produce in small stores: In summer 2012, Mississippi's Delta Fresh Foods Initiative provided Matheney's, a small grocery store and cafe in Rosedale, with technical assistance to connect with local farmers so the store could increase the quality and quantity of fresh produce it offers. The new initiative also provided marketing materials for the store including new signage and flyers.

Mobile markets: Mobile markets have the ability to impact multiple communities that lack grocery stores. MoGro uses a temperature-controlled trailer truck to provide access to healthy, affordable food to four rural Native American communities in New Mexico. First

launched in 2011 in partnership with Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health and La Montanita Co-op, MoGro carries a variety of fresh, refrigerated, frozen, canned and other healthy foods; it also offers free nutrition and cooking classes and fitness events.

Public-private partnerships: In the last few years, Kansas has lost more than one-third of its small-town grocery stores. Last year, a fire destroyed the only store in Onaga, a small town of 700 residents. When the owners decided not to rebuild, area residents committed to reopening the store. A local bank and county officials offered an area resident a package of low-interest rural development loans, and the Onaga City Council offered \$375,000 to the new operators

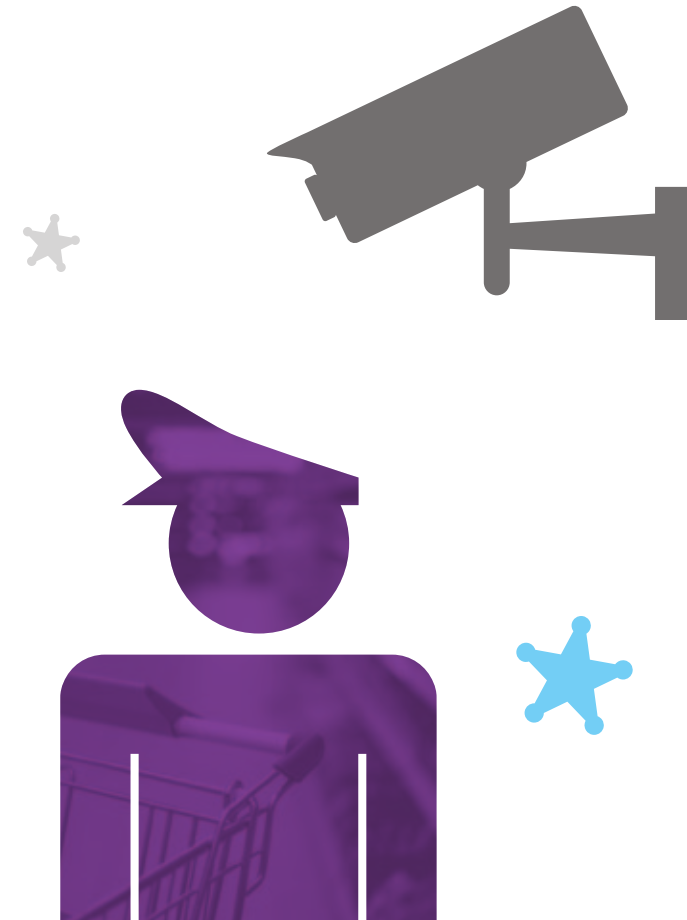
toward the new building. Similar partnerships of public and private funding have helped to establish and sustain several other rural grocery stores.

Alternative Distribution Model: Dixon Co-op Market in Dixon, New Mexico, a small town of 2,000 residents, has partnered with Affiliated Foods and Center Market to set up a new sub-distribution model. Center Market, located 20 minutes away in Espanola, places an additional order of goods for the co-op, which the regional wholesaler, Affiliated Foods, separates onto a different pallet. The Dixon Co-op pays a small handling fee to Center Market and sends volunteers to pick up orders.

RECOMMENDATION 9:

State and local government should work with grocers, developers, law enforcement and the community to help ensure a safe and secure environment for both customers and store personnel.

Security concerns, real or perceived, can be a major problem for healthy food retail operators in underserved communities. Stores find it financially difficult to operate in areas with high rates of theft and other types of crime. Security concerns also discourage customers from walking to a neighborhood store and possibly from shopping there altogether. Grocery store operators have commented that previous efforts to address security concerns have been insufficient. Community groups and their partners can develop food retail crime prevention districts, similar to neighborhood crime prevention districts. Designation of law enforcement units to address security issues that supermarkets face in underserved communities is a strategy that county and/or municipal departments can enact. Communities also can work with retailers on techniques that make the environment outside businesses safer, such as increased lighting and clearer sight lines. Such efforts are part of a practice called “Crime Prevention through Environmental Design” gaining popularity across the country.



Success Stories

California: The Coalition for Responsible Community Development partnered with the Los Angeles Police Department to promote neighborhood security, particularly in regards to retail and economic development. The organization hired local youths and young adults to improve public safety and the

appearance of local streets in South Los Angeles by abating 80,000 square feet of graffiti per week. The graffiti made individuals feel unsafe in this commercial district and provided reasons for businesses to disinvest. The graffiti abatement crews follow a 30- to 50-mile daily route covering 12 square miles including commercial corridors with high crime rates and 55 known gangs. The community partnership served

to tackle difficult economic and social problems resulting in an increased perception of safety in the neighborhood and the creation of a better retail business environment. Similar types of linkages between police enforcement and commercial/retail partners can provide safer communities surrounding grocery stores.

CONCLUSION

Providing better access to nutritious and affordable food will help improve the health of Mississippi residents. When people have convenient access to supermarkets, they eat more servings of fruits and vegetables and are more likely to maintain a healthy weight. Furthermore, increasing access to healthy, affordable foods complements the state's greater economic development agenda. If given the means to overcome the high preliminary costs associated with store development, grocery stores in lower-income communities can be sustainable enterprises, thereby increasing the economic vitality of neighborhoods. Supermarkets and grocery stores create quality jobs and contribute to the revitalization of urban and rural communities.

The nine recommendations developed by the Mississippi Grocery Access Task Force are achievable steps towards creating healthier and more vibrant communities in Mississippi. States and cities across the country have implemented similar changes to public policies, attracting new and expanded grocery stores to areas of need. The stores built through the successful public-private financing programs in states around the country continue to thrive, and make the case that after an initial infusion of funds, profitable grocery stores can be operated in underserved urban and rural communities.

We encourage state and local leaders to expedite the implementation of these recommendations. By working together, we can increase economic development in neighborhoods and support the health and well-being of children and families throughout Mississippi.

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APPENDIX: HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING PROGRAMS

LOCATION	NAME OF PROGRAM	PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS	FUNDING SOURCES	TYPES OF FINANCING
PA	Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative www.trfund.com/financing/Healthy_food/FreshFoodFinancing.html	PA Department of Community and Economic Development, The Food Trust, The Reinvestment Fund and the Urban Affairs Coalition	State commitment: \$30 million. Seeded with \$30 million from the state's Department of Community and Economic Development. Matched with \$146 million in additional public and private investment.	Loans: Maximum loan amount subject to TRF's current lending exposure policies. Grants: Up to \$250,000 per store and \$750,000 in total for one operator. Extraordinary grants of up to \$1 million were made available for projects with high potential for serving areas of extreme need.
NY	New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund www.liifund.org/nyhealthyfood	NY Empire State Development Corporation, Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF), The Reinvestment Fund and The Food Trust	State commitment: \$10 million. Seeded with \$10 million from the state's Empire State Development Corporation. Matched with a \$20 million commitment from The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. LIIF also received a \$3 million national Healthy Food Financing Initiative award in 2011.	Loans: Range in size from \$250,000 to \$5 million or larger for New Markets Tax Credit transactions. Grants: Range in size from \$5,000 to \$500,000 for capital grants and \$5,000 to \$200,000 for predevelopment grants.
LA	New Orleans Fresh Food Retailer Initiative www.hope-ec.org/index.php/new-orleans-fresh-food-retailer-initiative	City of New Orleans, Hope Enterprise Corporation and The Food Trust	Federal and private funding. Seeded with \$7 million in Disaster Community Development Block Grant funds. Matched 1:1 with HOPE investment.	Loans: Not to exceed \$1 million. Forgivable Loans: Up to \$500,000 or 20% of total financing needs.
NJ	New Jersey Food Access Initiative www.trfund.com/financing/Healthy_food/NJ_HealthyFoodRetailInitiative.pdf	NJ Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) and The Reinvestment Fund	State commitment: \$4 million. To date, financial partners include: NJ Economic Development Authority (\$4 million), Living Cities (\$2 million credit), and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (\$10 million program-related investment). TRF also received a \$3 million national Healthy Food Financing Initiative award in 2011.	Loans: Range in size from \$200,000 to \$4.5 million or larger for New Markets Tax Credit transactions. Grants: In some cases, loans may be paired with a predevelopment or capital grant, which range in size from \$5,000 to \$125,000. Recoverable Grants: Early-stage financing with no-interest loans, typically repaid by construction financing.
CA	California FreshWorks Fund www.cafreshworks.com	The California Endowment, NCB Capital Impact, Emerging Markets	Foundation and other private funding: To date, approximately \$264 million raised from a variety of investors: The California Endowment, NCB Capital Impact, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, US Bank, Calvert Foundation, Dignity Health, Kaiser Permanente, Bank of America, Citibank, Charles Schwab, Met Life and Opportunity Finance Network.	Loans: Up to \$8 million. Grants: Up to \$50,000.
IL	Illinois Fresh Food Fund www.iff.org/illinois-food	IL Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and IFF	State commitment: \$10 million. Seeded with a \$10 million grant from the IL Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. IFF has committed to matching the state dollars 3:1. Additionally, \$3 million in funding has been secured by IFF through the national Healthy Food Financing Initiative.	Loans: Typical loans range from \$250,000 to \$1 million. Grants: Grants are only available to those who are also applying for a loan. The grant amount can be up to 10% of the loan amount, not to exceed \$100,000.
National	Healthy Food Financing Initiative www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/community-economic-development/healthy-food-financing	US Departments of Treasury, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services	Federal funding: To date, the US Department of Treasury (CDFI Fund) has allocated \$47 million and the US Department of Health and Human Services (Office of Community Services) has allocated \$20 million.	Financing packages vary. HFFI dollars are given to Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and Community Development Corporations (CDCs) to disseminate to projects in their regions.

Selected Resources

- Center for Science and the Public Interest; Nutrition Policy** http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nutrition_policy.html
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States: Implementation and Measurement Guide** http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/community_strategies_guide.pdf
- City of Chicago, Shop Chicago** http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/shop_chicago.html
- City of Louisville, Economic Growth and Innovation Newsroom** <http://www.louisvilleky.gov/economicdevelopment/News/2012/FirstChoiceMarketOpensinParkDuValle.htm>
- Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles** <http://www.crala.org/internet-site/About/index.cfm>
- The Coalition for Responsible Community Development** <http://www.coalitionrcd.org/about.html>
- DevelopSpringfield** <http://www.developspringfield.com/>
- Food for Every Child: The Need for More Supermarkets in Mississippi** <http://www.thefoodtrust.org>
- Food Marketing Institute, Access to Healthier Foods: Opportunities and Challenges for Food Retailers in Underserved Areas** http://www.fmi.org/docs/health-wellness/Access_To_Healthier_Foods.pdf
- Harvard Health Law and Policy Clinic and Harvard Law School Mississippi Delta Project, Mississippi WIC for the 21st Century. Authors: Eleanor Simon and Emily Broad Leib. June 2011.** <http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/foodpolicyinitiative/files/2011/09/WIC-FINAL.pdf>
- Health Affairs, "Policy Solutions to the Grocery Gap" Authors: Allison Karpyn, Miriam Manon, Sarah Treuhft, Tracey Giang, Caroline Harries, and Kate McCoubrey** <http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=55729>
- Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, The Changing Models of Inner City Grocery Retailing** http://www.icic.org/ee_uploads/publications/TheChangingModels-02-July.pdf
- Institute of Medicine, Local Government Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity** <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2009/Local-Government-Actions-to-Prevent-Childhood-Obesity.aspx>
- Metropolitan Planning Organization** http://www.nashvillempo.org/plans_programs/rtp/default.aspx
- Mission: Readiness, Too Fat to Fight. 2010.** http://cdn.missionreadiness.org/MR_Too_Fat_to_Fight-1.pdf
- Mississippi Department of Human Services** <http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/pdfs/arrmississippipestps.pdf>
- PolicyLink and The Food Trust, The Grocery Gap: Who Has Access to Healthy Food and Why It Matters, Authors: Sarah Treuhft and Allison Karpyn** <http://www.thefoodtrust.org/pdf/GroceryGap.pdf>
- PolicyLink, Grocery Store Attraction Strategies: A Resource Guide for Community Activists and Local Governments** <http://www.policylink.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=lkIXLbMNJrE&b=5136581&ct=6994695>
- PolicyLink, Healthy Food, Healthy Communities** <http://www.policylink.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=lkIXLbMNJrE&b=5136581&ct=10958405>
- Public Health Law Policy, Getting to Grocery: Tools for Attracting Healthy Food Retail to Underserved Neighborhoods** <http://www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/products/getting-to-grocery>
- The Reinvestment Fund, Healthy Food Retail Financing at Work: Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative** http://www.cdfifund.gov/what_we_do/FinancingHealthyFoodOptionsResourceBank.asp
- Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future 2012** <http://healthyamericans.org/report/100/>
- United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/>
- Uplift Solutions** <http://www.upliftsolutions.org/>

Ensuring That Everyone Has Access To Affordable, Nutritious Food

The Food Trust, a nationally recognized nonprofit founded in Philadelphia in 1992, strives to make healthy food available to all. Research has shown that lack of access to healthy food has a profound impact on food choices and, therefore, a profound impact on health.

For 20 years, The Food Trust has worked with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers and policymakers to develop a comprehensive approach to improving the health of America's children. The Food Trust's innovative initiatives integrate nutrition education with increased availability of affordable, healthy foods.

This approach has been shown to reduce the incidence of childhood overweight; a study in the journal *Pediatrics* found that the agency's School Nutrition Policy Initiative resulted in a 50 percent reduction in the incidence of overweight among Philadelphia school children.

The Food Trust is recognized as a regional and national leader in the prevention of childhood obesity and other diet-related diseases for this and other notable initiatives to increase food access in underserved neighborhoods, including the Healthy Corner Store Initiative and the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative, a public-private partnership which has approved funding for nearly 90 fresh food retail projects across Pennsylvania.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention honored the Fresh Food Financing Initiative in its Showcase of Innovative Policy and Environmental Strategies for Obesity Prevention and Control, and the program was named one of the Top 15 Innovations in American Government by Harvard University. For more information or to order additional copies of this report, visit thefoodtrust.org or contact The Food Trust.

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