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Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food: Updated Estimates of Distance to Supermarkets Using 2010 Data

by [Michele Ver Ploeg](#), [Vince Breneman](#), [Paula Dutko](#), [Ryan Williams](#), Samantha Snyder, Chris Dicken, and [Phillip Kaufman](#)

Economic Research Report No. (ERR-143) 54 pp, November 2012

Efforts to encourage Americans to improve their diets and to eat more nutritious foods presume that a wide variety of these foods are accessible to everyone. But for some Americans and in some communities, access to healthy foods may be limited. Using population data from the 2010 Census, income and vehicle availability data from the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, and a 2010 directory of supermarkets, this report estimates that 9.7 percent of the U.S. population, or 29.7 million people, live in low-income areas more than 1 mile from a supermarket. However, only 1.8 percent of all households live more than 1 mile from a supermarket and do not have a vehicle. Estimated distance to the nearest three supermarkets is an indicator of the choices available to consumers and the level of competition among stores. Estimates show that half of the U.S. population lives within 2 miles of 3 supermarkets.



Keywords: food access, food deserts, supermarkets, food assistance, low-income, diet and health

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