



FOOD for EVERY CHILD

A PLAN TO IMPROVE HEALTH AND ECONOMIC VITALITY IN MASSACHUSETTS



There are too few grocery stores and healthy food resources in many

Massachusetts 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 local grocery stores and other food enterprises provide. A 2010 report by The Food Trust, a nationally recognized nonprofit, found that despite being one of the most affluent states in the nation, Massachusetts has fewer supermarkets per capita than almost any other state, ranking third lowest nationwide.

Through mapping, the accompanying report *Food for Every Child: The Need for More Supermarkets in Massachusetts* outlines the extent and implications of the grocery shortage in Massachusetts 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 Massachusetts.**

There are large areas of the state with few full-service grocery stores and many neighborhoods where none exist.

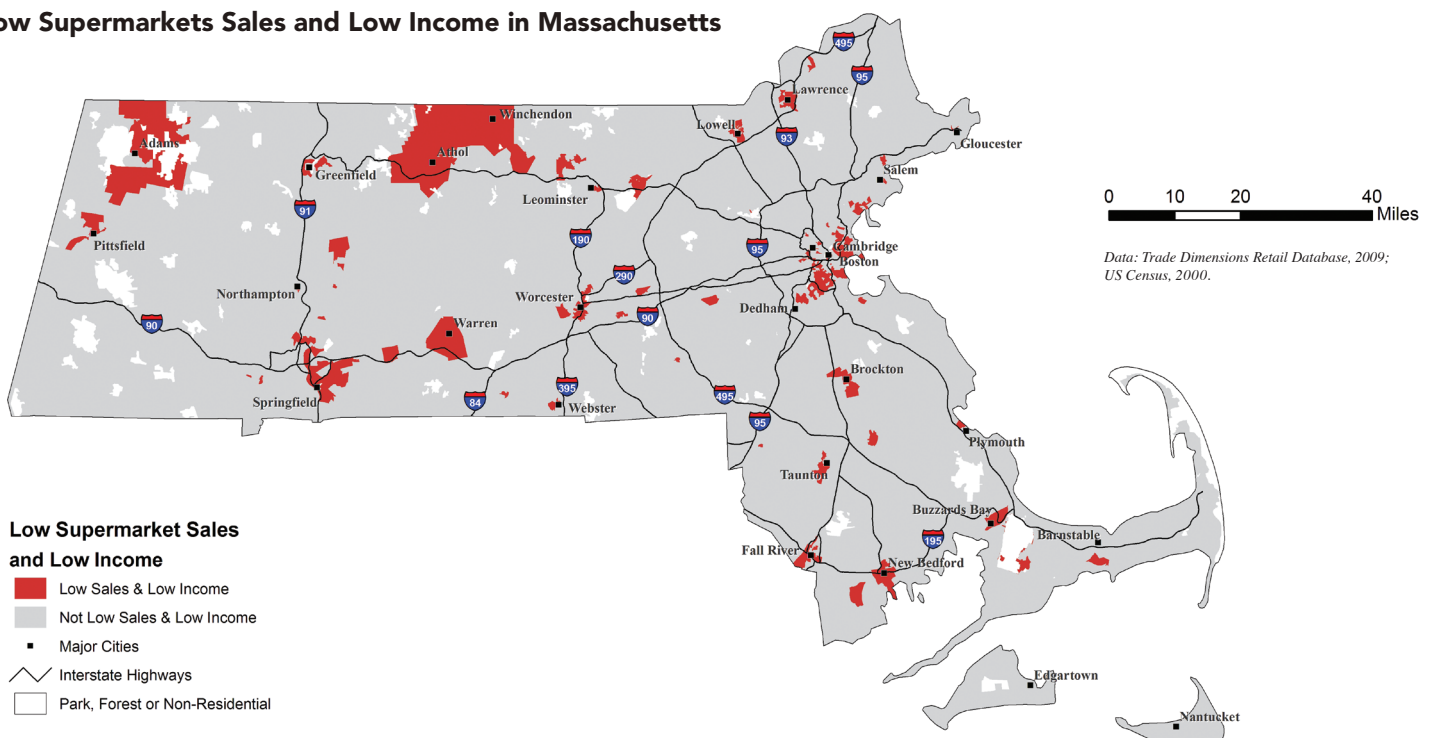
- **The uneven distribution of supermarkets in Massachusetts leaves a disproportionate number of lower-income people without access to nutritious food.** This issue impacts nearly 20 percent of the state's population: over 1 million Massachusetts residents, including over 300,000 children, live in lower-income areas with limited access to a local grocery store.

- **There is a connection between diet-related disease and healthy food access.** Many lower-income communities in Massachusetts have both poor food access and high rates of diet-related deaths. 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.

- **Healthy food retail sparks economic revitalization and brings jobs to areas that need them the most.** A single grocery store can create as many as 200 jobs for local residents, lead to increased property values and spark complementary development nearby.

Over 1 million Massachusetts residents, including over 300,000 children, live in communities with limited grocery access.

Low Supermarkets Sales and Low Income in Massachusetts



HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING: IMPROVING HEALTH, CREATING JOBS

Healthy food financing is 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. **Healthy food financing programs provide 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 businesses 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 commonwealth's Fresh Food Financing Initiative in 2004. This public-private partnership, seeded with \$30 million from Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development, 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 residents.

The success of this model has influenced the design and creation of similar programs in several states, including **California, Colorado, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, New Jersey and New York**; momentum is growing, with efforts underway in nearly a dozen additional states, including Massachusetts. Additionally, a federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) has been established by the U.S. Departments of Treasury, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services. Across the country, these initiatives are improving health and revitalizing communities through investment in healthy food retail.

The Massachusetts Grocery Access Task Force *Calling for Public Investment in Healthy Food Retail*

To address the critical need for more grocery stores and healthy food resources in many communities, the Massachusetts Food Association, the Massachusetts Public Health Association, The Boston Foundation and The Food Trust convened the Massachusetts Grocery Access Task Force. This group of over 40 leaders from the grocery industry, state and local government, and the economic development, public health and civic sectors, came together to examine the barriers to grocery development in the state and identify policy recommendations for increasing access to healthy, affordable foods in underserved urban and rural communities.

MEMBERS

Co-Chairs:

Dr. Paula Johnson, Executive Director, Connors Center for Women's Health & Gender Biology; Chief, Division of Women's Health, Brigham & Women's Hospital
Charles D'Amour, President and Chief Operating Officer, Big Y Foods, Inc.

Participating Organizations:

Associated Grocers of New England	Massachusetts Food Association
Big Y Foods, Inc.	Massachusetts Office of Housing and Economic Development
Boston Community Capital	Massachusetts Public Health Association
Boston Public Health Commission	MassDevelopment
Bozzuto's	MassINC
C&S Wholesale	Partners for a Healthier Community
City Feed and Supply	Partners Health Care
City of Boston – Mayor's Office	Project Bread
Connors Center, Brigham and Women's Hospital	Roche Bros. Supermarkets
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston	Save-A-Lot
Food Bank of Western Massachusetts	Springfield Office of Planning & Economic Development
Foodmaster Super Markets	Stop & Shop
Hannaford Bros.	The Boston Foundation
Housing Partnership Network	The Food Trust
Hunger Free & Healthy, Worcester Food Policy Council	The Greater Boston Food Bank
Initiative for Competitive Inner City	Tropical Foods International
JD Consulting Services	United Way of Central Massachusetts
Kraft Foods	Wakefern Food Corp.
Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations	Walmart

STRATEGIES

The Massachusetts Grocery Access Task Force released its recommendations in 2012. These addressed a variety of strategies including:

Healthy food financing: Massachusetts should create a flexible financing program that provides grants, loans and technical assistance to support the development, renovation and expansion of supermarkets and other retailers selling healthy foods in underserved communities. Massachusetts should seek to leverage seed capital from the state through a public-private partnership.

Planning and development: Massachusetts should adopt food retailing as a priority by assisting with land assembly; expediting permitting; making available and marketing existing public incentives; and developing affordable and efficient transportation services for neighborhoods without convenient access to a full-service supermarket.

Community partnerships: The public sector should prioritize support for food retailers that partner with community-based organizations; sell healthy and Massachusetts-grown food; and participate in SNAP and WIC programs. The state should partner with the food industry and community-based organizations to promote healthy choices in grocery stores, and to create tailored workforce development programs for healthy food retail jobs.

The full recommendations of the Grocery Access Task Force and the *Food for Every Child* report can be found at: thefoodtrust.org/Massachusetts

Healthy Food Financing: By the Numbers

- In New York, the Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund has created or preserved over **1,000 jobs**
- In California, the FreshWorks Fund has financed **22 projects**, impacting more than **2.3 million people**
- In Pennsylvania, the Fresh Food Financing Initiative has supported **88 projects**, creating or retaining **5,000 jobs**

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSE: THE MASSACHUSETTS FOOD TRUST PROGRAM

In 2014, the Massachusetts legislature responded to the recommendations of the Grocery Access Task Force, creating the Massachusetts Food Trust Program.

The program was established in statute after being passed by the House and Senate and signed by the Governor. Modeled on similar initiatives across the country, this program would provide loans, grants and technical assistance to support new and expanded healthy food retailers and food enterprises in areas that need them most. This could include supermarkets, corner stores, farmers' markets, mobile markets, community kitchens, food truck commissaries, indoor and outdoor greenhouses, and food distribution hubs that create jobs in low or moderate income communities.

While signing the program into law marked an important milestone in the state's commitment to improving food access in areas of need, no funding has been allocated to launch the initiative. Task force members and partners across the state are continuing to work together to ensure that the program is adequately funded and implemented successfully. There is broad support to implement the Massachusetts Food Trust Program from leaders in the food industry, and public health, economic and community development, medical, "buy local", anti-hunger and philanthropic organizations. Through public investment, we can increase access to healthy foods and create jobs for residents across the commonwealth.

For more information:

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The Food Trust

Ensuring That Everyone Has Access To Affordable, Nutritious Food

For more than 20 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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