

# Food Accessibility: A Key to Nutrition Security

## Food Insecurity

Limited or uncertain access to sufficient and affordable nutritious foods.



**In 2020, almost 15% of all US households were considered food insecure.**



**20% of Black households were considered food insecure in 2021.**

## Healthier Food Accessibility is a Social Determinant of Health:

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) are *non-medical factors that influence health impact & functioning.*

SDOH are the conditions or experiences in which people are born, grow, work, live & age that can vary greatly person to person and impact a person's well-being.



Access to grocery stores that carry healthier food options (such as fresh fruit, vegetables, low-fat fish and poultry) are not located equitably across residential and regional areas in the United States. These areas, with little or no healthier options are know as **food desert**.



Urban, suburban, and rural areas can be overwhelmed with stores that sell unhealthy and inexpensive foods, including soda, snacks, and other high sugar foods. This is known as a **food swamp**.

## ↔ Food Desert Vs. Food Swamp ↔



**NO or FEW** grocery stores/places that carry food items **AT ALL**.



*This means there may only be 1 grocery store, 1 pharmacy, 1 liquor store and 1 sandwich shop in a neighborhood.*



**MANY** places to buy food items that are low-cost and low-nutrition but **FEW or NO** places to buy healthier food options.



*This means there may only be 1 grocery store with healthier options **BUT** 3 burger shops, 4 pizza shops and 4 wing shops in a neighborhood.*

# Why Addressing Food Swamps and Food Deserts is Important

Based on the most recent **Thresholds** Member Survey, **15% of individuals reported that they either "ran out of money" or "could not afford to eat balanced meals with nutrients from fruit, vegetables, dairy or meat."**

## Improving Nutrition: Not Just Food, but Healthful Food



Nutrition-related illnesses disproportionately affect food-insecure people. When people do not have enough food to eat or have to choose inexpensive foods with low-nutritional value, it can negatively impact their health. A nutritious diet complements medication and helps them manage disease.

## Removing Barriers: Helping People Navigate Food Programs



Knowing what programs are available is an important first step to connecting with benefits. Some people face additional barriers to enrollment. Community-based services like **Thresholds** working in partnership with government agencies can help people complete the application process at neighborhood locations that are easier to access with limited mobility and that feel less stigmatized.

## Increasing Food Access: Connecting Communities with Food Retail and Nutrition Programs



Engage in local health programs like: **Urban Growers Collective**, **Fresh Moves Mobile Market**, federal food and nutritional supplemental programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (**SNAP**) and the Special Supplemental Nutritional Program for Women, Infants, and Children (**WIC**). Food pantries also have access to a diverse selection of healthy foods in moving towards a more stable, food-secure future.

