

Inner City Lacks Grocery Stores

Use with Chapter 7, Retail Locations

Chris Kenning, "Cities Study Dearth of Healthy Food," *USA Today*, January 20, 2008.

Poor neighborhoods in urban areas such as Louisville, KY, Detroit, MI, and Philadelphia, PA have a shortage of full-service supermarkets. There are an abundance of convenience stores, but these stores do not sell fresh fruits and vegetables, nor meats.

The health departments have gotten involved in this disparity because of the correlation between health problems and the lack of quality food choices available. Without having healthy choices available, these people frequent the convenience store for potato chips, pop and ice cream. These foods do not provide people with the necessary nutrients, not to mention the high fat and sugar content that these foods contain.

Sometimes going to a supermarket can mean an hour-long bus ride in which the person can only buy what he/she can carry with them. Making such an effort to get fresh food is not commonplace among most people in these areas. Researchers are trying to figure out whether the residents' health really improves with a full-service grocery store in close proximity. The consumers in the poor urban areas may be so accustomed to poor quality food choices that a large grocery store may not change their habits, but actually make it easier for them to buy more of these same types of foods. Nutritional education may be necessary in minimizing this gap for people.

The Louisville Health department is providing incentives for small convenience stores to carry fresh produce and increase nutrition awareness. They are also introducing farmers markets. In Philadelphia, the Fresh Food Financing Initiative has spent \$22 million in projects to build supermarkets in these poor urban areas, and refrigerators for corner stores to carry more fresh produce.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do some cities lack full-service supermarkets in lower-income neighborhoods?

Full-service supermarkets would rather situate themselves in high-quality neighborhoods where they can sell higher margin goods and not have the risks that occur in lower-income neighborhoods.

2. What are some cities doing to solve the problem?

Cities are investing large sums of money to build grocery stores, introduce nutritional educations, and bring farmers markets into the areas.