

Direct food assistance programs are another strategy to increase access to healthy foods. Nutrition assistance programs comprise more than two-thirds of the federal Farm Bill. The largest is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provided \$76.06 billion in benefits to 47.6 million Americans in FY 2013.<sup>131</sup> In addition to providing monthly benefits, SNAP's nutrition

education component provides federal grants to states for efforts to help participants get the most out of their benefits by encouraging smart shopping and healthy eating habits.<sup>132</sup> SNAP also licenses eligible farmers' markets so participants can use their benefits at those locations. The 2014 law included a variety of reforms to the SNAP program and reduced funding for the program as well.

It also included updated stocking requirements for retailers that accept SNAP benefits to help ensure SNAP beneficiaries have healthier options. The law also created the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive grant program and provided \$100 million to test and evaluate strategies to incentivize SNAP beneficiaries to purchase of fruits and vegetables.

### WHY ACCESS TO HEALTHY AFFORDABLE FOOD MATTERS:

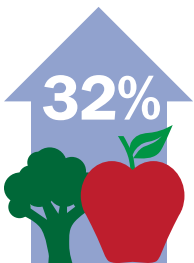


**23.5 million**

Americans don't have access to a supermarket within a mile of their home



Is the distance **70 percent** of Mississippi food stamp-eligible families live from the closest large grocery store

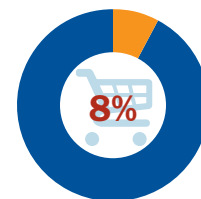


Increase in fruit and vegetable consumption for Blacks with each new supermarket in their neighborhood

Source: PolicyLink, The Grocery Gap

- Supermarkets and supercenters provide the most reliable access to a variety of healthy, high-quality products at the lowest cost, and shoppers generally prefer these stores to smaller grocery stores and convenience stores.<sup>133</sup>
- Adults living in neighborhoods with supermarkets or with supermarkets and grocery stores have the lowest rates of obesity (21 percent), and those living in neighborhoods with no supermarkets and access to only convenience stores, smaller grocery stores, or both had the highest rates (32 percent to 40 percent obesity).<sup>134</sup>
- Blacks living in a census tract with a supermarket are more likely to meet dietary guidelines for fruits and vegetable consumption, and for every additional supermarket in a tract, produce consumption rose 32 percent. Among Whites, each additional supermarket corresponded with an 11 percent increase in produce consumption.<sup>135</sup>
- Adults with no supermarkets within a mile of their homes are 25 percent to 46 percent less likely to have a healthy diet than those with the most supermarkets near their homes.<sup>136</sup>
- New and improved grocery stores can catalyze commercial revitalization in a community. An analysis of the economic impacts of five new stores that opened with FFI assistance found that, for four of the stores, total employment surrounding the supermarket increased at a faster rate than citywide trends.<sup>137</sup>

Percent of African Americans who live in a census tract with a supermarket



Percent of Whites who live in a census tract with a supermarket

