



STIMULATING  
**SUPERMARKET**  
DEVELOPMENT  
IN TENNESSEE

*A report of the  
Tennessee Grocery Access  
Task Force*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was prepared by Stacy Taylor, Jordan Tucker and Caroline Harries at The Food Trust; it was released fall 2012. Members of the Tennessee Grocery Access Task Force, co-chaired by Renee Frazier and Jeff Olson, provided valuable input. Support for this report was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Photos by Ryan Donnell.

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# Tennessee Grocery Access Task Force

Dear Neighbors,

As co-chairs of the Tennessee Grocery Access Task Force, we are honored to present this report outlining our task force's policy recommendations for developing healthy, affordable food retail in underserved communities throughout Tennessee. Nearly one million Tennessee residents, including more than 200,000 children, live in lower-income communities underserved by supermarkets. While supermarkets are not the only answer for promoting healthy eating, they provide the greatest variety of healthy, affordable food for our residents while creating jobs and spurring economic development. In addition, a growing body of evidence shows that an increased presence of supermarkets in underserved communities helps people live healthier lives.

This task force comprised nearly 60 experts representing the leadership from civic, health, food retail, economic development, government and philanthropic organizations. The task force met to explore barriers to supermarket and grocery store development in neighborhoods where residents lack access to nutritious foods. As a group we identified 10 policy recommendations to advocate for change at both the state and local levels. We are thankful for the dedicated energy of this group, which blended a variety of perspectives to create realistic and effective solutions. We also would like to extend our gratitude to the American Heart Association and the Tennessee Grocers and Convenience Store Association for convening our partnership.

Every community deserves to have convenient access to fresh, affordable and nutritious food. We look forward to bringing these policies to fruition and supporting the expansion of food retail development across Tennessee. Implementing the recommendations outlined in this report will require committed, broad-based leadership to attract new supermarkets to Tennessee. We deeply appreciate the hard work and commitment of Tennessee Grocery Access Task Force members as well as the support of the state of Tennessee. Together, we can make healthy, affordable food available for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Renee S. Frazier".

Renee S. Frazier  
Co-chair  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Healthy Memphis Common Table

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeffrey Olson".

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# INTRODUCTION

Too many Tennesseans, in both urban and rural communities, do not have a supermarket in their community. The resulting lack of access to healthy, affordable food undermines the health and well-being of children and families who reside in Tennessee. A significant and growing body of research has found that people with convenient access to a supermarket eat more fruits and vegetables and are more likely to maintain a healthy weight.

With funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Food Trust, a nationally recognized nonprofit, issued the report *Food for Every Child: The Need for More Supermarkets in Tennessee*. The report documents the need for more supermarkets in underserved communities and describes how state and local policies can help change these conditions. The report highlights the problem: nearly one million Tennessee residents, including more than 200,000 children, live in lower-income communities underserved by supermarkets. These communities exist in rural and urban areas throughout the state, including in the neighborhoods of Caycee Homes, Edgehill and the area surrounding Charlotte Pike in Nashville and Binghampton, Soulsville and Frayser in Memphis. *Food for Every Child* led to a special convening of key stakeholders in Tennessee to develop a series of policy recommendations to increase access to healthy, affordable foods for residents in underserved areas throughout the state.

*Tennessee spends an estimated \$3.6 billion each year treating obesity-related diseases.*

The Tennessee Grocery Access Task Force was convened by the American Heart Association, the Tennessee Grocers and Convenience Association and The Food Trust. The task force is a cohort of leaders from the supermarket industry, state and local government and economic development, public health, philanthropy and civic sectors of the state. This task force builds upon the work completed in the past several years by a variety of government, private and civic leaders interested in improving access to healthy foods. The task force developed 10 recommendations for state and local public policies that will improve the availability of affordable and nutritious food in underserved areas through the development of supermarkets and other healthy food stores.

These recommendations call upon state and local governments to prioritize grocery store and supermarket development in underserved communities. Research indicates that people who live in communities without a supermarket suffer from disproportionately high rates of obesity, diabetes and other diet-related health problems. This situation is pressing; Tennessee spends an estimated \$3.6 billion each year treating obesity-related diseases. Providing Tennesseans with greater access to nutritious, affordable food will help alleviate these public health concerns.

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Efforts to improve supermarket access must work in tandem with similar initiatives to improve nutrition and reduce obesity in Tennessee. The recommendations put forth by this task force are designed to promote the creation of new private and public projects in the state to change local food environments to increase choice in underserved communities.

The task force also understands that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for all communities in Tennessee. Food retail projects can take on myriad different forms, including new supermarket developments, expansion or renovation of existing grocery stores and alternative models such as farmers' markets, healthy corner store projects, co-ops and mobile markets. These efforts can also support complementary initiatives to expand the local food system and promote the sale of Tennessee-grown foods.

*Efforts to improve supermarket access must work in tandem with similar initiatives to improve nutrition and reduce obesity in Tennessee.*

The Tennessee Grocery Access Task Force recognizes that efforts to increase access to healthy, affordable food complement the state's greater economic development agenda. In today's challenging fiscal climate, the success of efforts to improve healthy food access will depend on coordinated action from state government agencies, community development organizations, charitable foundations, the supermarket industry and others. New supermarkets and quality food stores can create jobs to stimulate local economies and contribute to revitalization projects in urban and rural communities.

Tennessee Grocery Access Task Force members and The Food Trust are committed to working with state and local governments to implement these 10 policy recommendations for children and families in Tennessee who deserve the opportunity to lead healthier lives.

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

*We, the Tennessee Grocery Access Task Force—a public-private partnership of leadership from the supermarket industry, economic development, public health and civic sectors—call upon Tennessee to prioritize grocery store and supermarket access for underserved families and communities. The following recommendations describe critical steps toward achieving that goal:*

- 1 State and local governments should explicitly adopt affordable, healthy and fresh food retailing as a priority for the comprehensive development of communities.
- 2 State and local governments should create new and modify existing economic development programs and target them to the supermarket and grocery industry with an emphasis on providing affordable, healthy and fresh food options in underserved, lower-income communities.
- 3 The State of Tennessee should develop a flexible business financing initiative to provide grants, loans and other incentives to support the development, renovation and expansion of supermarkets and other stores selling affordable, healthy and fresh foods in underserved, lower-income communities.
- 4 State and local governments should reduce regulatory barriers to supermarket and grocery store investment in underserved, lower-income communities.
- 5 State and local governments should develop a comprehensive food access approach to include a focus on supermarket access. Supermarket and grocery store access is an important component of a multi-faceted strategy to address inequalities in food access across the state.
- 6 State and local governments and regional organizations, in partnership with groups, such as existing Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs, high schools, local workforce investment boards and community colleges, should target new and expand existing training programs to ensure there is quality workforce for supermarket and grocery store retailing.
- 7 The State of Tennessee should continue its efforts to develop a new distribution schedule for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- 8 State and local governments should partner with the grocery industry, community organizations and public health professionals to highlight and support best practices for promoting healthy foods.
- 9 State and local governments should work with transit agencies, community organizations and retailers to develop affordable and efficient transportation services for neighborhoods without convenient access to a full-service supermarket.
- 10 State and local governments should engage leaders from the grocery industry and civic sector to inform this work. They should convene state and regional advisory groups of leaders including the supermarket industry, community and economic development leaders, the financial sector, public health officials, civic sector and others to guide the implementation of these recommendations.

## RECOMMENDATION 1:

# State and local governments should explicitly adopt affordable, healthy and fresh food retailing as a priority for the comprehensive development of communities.

Tennessee's communities would benefit from a strategic plan focused on stimulating new investments and improvements in the food retail sector. A strong statewide food retail initiative would identify strategies to expand and improve access to affordable and nutritious food in Tennessee's communities. The initiative could include the following services:

- Centralized project management and government support for food retail projects
- A single point of access for information about neighborhood retail development opportunities
- Customized market information about specific development opportunities
- A strategic plan to coordinate retail initiatives with neighborhood needs

## Success Stories

**New York:** New York City and New York state have explicitly adopted food retailing as a priority in community development. On May 16, 2009, New York Governor David A. Paterson announced the Healthy Food/Healthy Communities initiative which adopts "comprehensive strategies to expand and encourage the growth of new grocery stores in underserved neighborhoods." To ensure that the goals for this program are met, a state fund of \$10 million has been established.

The governor also announced additional initiatives which make food retail a vital part of community development, including incentives for all affordable housing proposals to include food markets as part of the retail component, a permanent farmers' market grant program and financial incentives for food retailers to be green and energy efficient.

In parallel with the kick-off of the statewide Healthy Food/Healthy Communities initiative, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn launched the city's Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) program. This initiative provides zoning and financial incentives to property owners, developers and grocery store operators in areas of the city currently underserved by grocery stores.

"There are not enough healthy food options in many urban and rural communities throughout New York State. The lack of affordable, nutritious food is negatively impacting the revitalization of many communities and the health of New Yorkers," said Governor Paterson. "The Healthy Food/Healthy Communities program combined with New York City's FRESH program provides incentives to locate energy-efficient food markets in underserved communities and connect food markets with New York's agriculture products."



## RECOMMENDATION 2:

State and local governments should create new and modify existing economic development programs and target them to the supermarket and grocery industry with an emphasis on providing affordable, healthy and fresh food options in underserved, lower-income communities.

The food retail industry needs public sector support to overcome the high costs of development, particularly in urban areas. Existing economic development and financing programs are often not available to food retailers, and grocers are not aware of how to access these resources. Business tools, such as sales tax abatements on equipment purchases, property tax abatements, tax exempt financing bonds and the use of density bonuses can encourage supermarkets to invest in underserved areas. At present, these tools are applied to other forms of real estate development that are considered desirable, such as housing development. They should also be applied to the supermarket industry to encourage the construction and renovation of new and existing healthy food retail outlets throughout Tennessee.

### *Success Stories*

**Kentucky:** In Louisville, a combination of city loans, federal grants and tax credit financing helped to bring First Choice Market to the Park DuValle neighborhood in southwest Louisville, a key priority in the city's redevelopment plan. The \$4.4 million project included a \$3.2 million loan from the city, funded with CDBG-R (stimulus) funds, two \$100,000 city loans, \$35,000 for infrastructure improvements from a local councilmember and a nearly \$1.2 million New Markets Tax Credit equity commitment by local banks. First Choice Market, an independently operated grocery store, opened in 2012 creating more than 150

construction jobs and 40 permanent jobs and bringing fresh fruits and vegetables to a neighborhood that had been without a full-service supermarket for over a decade.

**Washington, D.C.:** Tax exemptions can encourage developers to include supermarkets over other competing retail projects. In Washington, D.C., the Department of Planning and Economic Development approved the Tax Exemption Act in 2000. This act was a part of a citywide supermarket attraction and retention effort, which resulted in several new store openings and expansions in targeted areas throughout the city.

In addition to benefiting from the tax exemption, new developments received additional incentives from the city, including Community Development Block Grant funding.

While these successes speak to the potential for public incentives to influence supermarket development and help close the financing gap, a comprehensive program is needed to stimulate supermarket development in communities throughout Tennessee.

### RECOMMENDATION 3:

The State of Tennessee should develop a flexible business financing initiative to provide grants, loans and other incentives to support the development, renovation and expansion of supermarkets and other stores selling affordable, healthy and fresh foods in underserved, lower-income communities.

The State of Tennessee should dedicate funds—in the form of grants and loans—to stimulate the development, renovation and expansion of supermarkets in underserved communities, support workforce training, offset development and construction costs and fund soft costs including feasibility and market studies.



### Success Stories

**Pennsylvania:** In 2004, Pennsylvania created the nation's first statewide program to address the lack of fresh food availability in its communities: the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI). The initiative was started with \$30 million in state funds. A Community Development Financial Institution, The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), used the state's capital to leverage other sources of public and private capital, for a total of \$192 million in total project costs. Sources included banks, store operators and developers and federal, local and philanthropic sources. The Food Trust partnered with The Reinvestment Fund to co-administer the initiative. Nearly 90 new and expanded fresh food retail projects across the state have been approved for funding, creating or retaining over 5,000 jobs and

servicing an estimated 500,000 people. The success of FFFI in Pennsylvania influenced the creation and design of similar initiatives, such as the New York Healthy Food/Healthy Communities Fund, the California FreshWorks Fund, the New Orleans Fresh Food Retailer Initiative in Louisiana and the Illinois Fresh Food Fund.

**New Jersey:** In March 2012, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation announced its \$12 million dollar investment to launch the New Jersey Food Access Initiative, which will provide financing to new and expanding food retailers in New Jersey's underserved communities. The initiative, administered by The Reinvestment Fund, a Community Development Financial Institution, was created in response to the recommendations put forth by the state's Food Marketing Task Force, a cohort of leaders convened by the New Jersey Food Council,

the New Jersey Economic Development Authority and The Food Trust. The Reinvestment Fund and the State of New Jersey have identified target areas throughout the state where residents have limited access to healthy and affordable foods. "By aligning economic and social objectives, the Christie Administration is helping to revitalize communities throughout New Jersey," said Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno, who spoke at the kick-off event for the new initiative, which was held in front of the construction site of a supermarket in New Brunswick. "We will not only improve access to healthy food, but also provide new jobs and business opportunities for local residents."

## RECOMMENDATION 4:

# State and local governments should reduce regulatory barriers to supermarket and grocery store investment in underserved, lower-income communities.

State and local government approval processes can add several years and substantial cost to a supermarket project in an underserved area. Regulation is important for public health and safety purposes, but there are ways to streamline these obstacles for supermarket operators without sacrificing the integrity of the process. Government can show preference to development it hopes to encourage by expediting approval processes, thereby reducing project costs. Creating a single point of access for interacting with government would help supermarket operators navigate the complex process of developing supermarkets in underserved communities. Codes should be reviewed and amended to reduce the length of time it takes to develop a supermarket.

## *Success Stories*

**Illinois:** In Chicago, the city has addressed healthy food retail needs in its communities by making the development process for retailers more streamlined and less burdensome. The city has designated a single agency, called Shop Chicago, to address the multiple concerns of potential retailers and to coordinate the development process for projects. Shop Chicago's programs simplify the approval process and identify measures to facilitate land assembly, among many other proactive measures. As a result, the Shop Chicago program has successfully attracted new grocery stores to underserved neighborhoods.

**California:** The Community Redevelopment Agency of the city of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) developed an incentive package to attract new food retailers to South Los Angeles neighborhoods that were underserved by grocery retailers. Anticipating some of the regulatory hurdles for grocery store developments, the Los Angeles City Planning Department and Department of Building Services worked with CRA/LA to assist grocery operators in securing financial products to support their new projects. Since its inception, the program has been successful in attracting new grocers to the Los Angeles area.

## RECOMMENDATION 5:

State and local governments should develop a comprehensive food access approach to include a focus on supermarket access. Supermarket and grocery store access is an important component of a multi-faceted strategy to address inequalities in food access across the state.

Tennessee should synthesize healthy food retail projects with complementary efforts to promote good health in underserved communities. Attracting grocery stores and supermarkets to the state must be one component of a larger strategy to improve the health of children and families and should complement other efforts throughout Tennessee that strive to improve food access in local communities.

Cities and counties across the country have enacted measures to address inequalities related to food access and diversify local food systems, to ensure residents in underserved communities have greater access to nutritious foods. These programs can serve as models for future programs in Tennessee.

## *Success Stories*

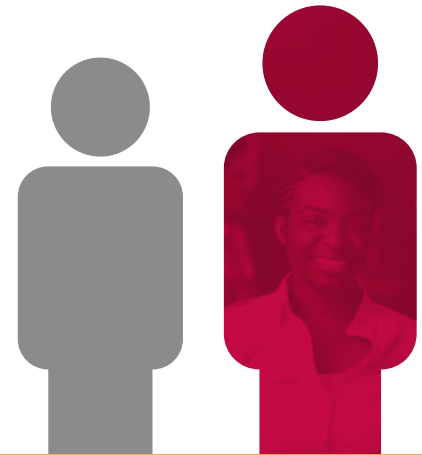
**Pennsylvania:** In 2008, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter signed the Philadelphia Food Charter, pledging the City of Philadelphia's commitment to supporting its local food system. The charter included a vision for improving the city's urban agricultural system and for ensuring these efforts complement the city's economic and development goals, including the creation of jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities in the retail sector. Additionally, the charter promotes healthy eating among children in Philadelphia, encourages nutrition education and supports the role of farmers' markets and gardens in neighborhoods across the city.

**Maryland:** The Baltimore Food Policy Initiative (BFPI) is an intergovernmental city agency that seeks to increase access to healthy and affordable foods in underserved communities throughout the city. Members of Baltimore's Department of City Planning, Office of Sustainability and Health Department and the Baltimore Development Corporation have worked together to develop a comprehensive approach and strategy to improve food access for city residents. BFPI provides technical assistance to farmers' market managers, supports nutrition education in city public schools, encourages urban agriculture on vacant lands and has worked to establish virtual markets with food pick-up points at libraries and local elementary schools.

## RECOMMENDATION 6:

State and local governments and regional organizations, in partnership with groups such as existing Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs, high schools, local workforce investment boards and community colleges, should target new and expand existing training programs to ensure there is quality workforce for supermarket and grocery store retailing.

The supermarket industry cites the lack of an available workforce as a barrier to supermarket and grocery store development. Often it is difficult to find candidates who have had suitable job training for specialized needs such as produce and meat handling. Supermarket industry leaders are cognizant of the value of their labor force and the need to educate that workforce to address such issues as shrinkage, effective customer service techniques and employees' rights and obligations. New and existing programs should ensure that a quality workforce is available for grocery store retailing once a store opens in a community. Programs should be coordinated and targeted for grocery retail.



### *Success Stories*

**Ohio:** For Ben Fligner, the answer to how to train employees for his downtown Lorain, Ohio, grocery store came in the form of a \$1,300 matching grant from Project TEN (Train Employees Now). Unveiled in 2007, Project TEN is the result of an effort by Lorain County to leverage workforce development monies distributed by the state. The matching grant made it possible for Fligner to send five employees to an Ohio Department of Agriculture training program which certified the workers in meat handling. This provided the needed workforce training to complement Fligner's recent expansion from a 12,000-square-foot operation to a 32,000-square-foot one that included a new full-

service meat counter. The grocery store also was able to establish a wholesale meat business and a catering department. The supermarket, which used to employ 32 workers, is now able to support a staff of 90.

**Pennsylvania:** In Philadelphia's Eastwick community, residents were devastated when the area's only grocery store closed. Many residents had to arrange car rides with family and friends or take multiple buses to shop at stores in neighboring suburbs. Fortunately, things greatly improved when grant and loan assistance from the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative helped to offset higher construction and workforce development costs in the neighborhood, allowing the Brown's ShopRite of Island Avenue to open its doors.

The 57,000-square-foot supermarket has brought 258 quality jobs to the area. Most of the employees are residents of the surrounding community, which is predominantly African American and West African. Through funding from the initiative, a local workforce development agency has developed a customized training program for the Island Avenue ShopRite and five other stores. This program improves employee retention and helps employees advance in their careers, setting employees on the path for long-term success within the grocery industry.

## RECOMMENDATION 7:

### The State of Tennessee should continue its efforts to develop a new distribution schedule for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

When SNAP/food stamp benefits are dispersed unevenly throughout the month, food retail stores experience a surge of business at the time of distribution—often at the beginning of the month—that produces myriad unintended consequences, including long lines at checkout, overcrowding and issues with adequate product supply. These challenges make some retailers hesitant to operate in communities with heavy SNAP participation. Fortunately, cooperative efforts between key stakeholders in Tennessee have led to the overhaul of the state’s SNAP distribution schedule. Beginning in October of 2012, the state’s SNAP distribution schedule will be extended from a 10-day cycle to a 20-day cycle, thereby improving the effectiveness of the program. This change will not only benefit SNAP participants, but also grocers, wholesalers, and suppliers tied to Tennessee’s local food system. This new distribution schedule for SNAP benefits in Tennessee helps ensure that fresh foods are available throughout the month and that grocery stores can properly serve consumers in areas of high food stamp volume. Additionally, this improvement to the distribution schedule is evidence of the State of Tennessee’s capacity to implement such changes that increase access to healthy foods in local communities.



#### *Success Stories*

**Illinois:** Prior to 2010, 70 percent of SNAP/food stamp recipients received their benefits on the first day of the month; the remaining 30 percent of benefit issuances were staggered throughout the month. As a result of this schedule, grocery operators had difficulty adequately stocking their stores, which were flooded with shoppers at the beginning of the month. Providing

adequate hours for their employees throughout the month was also an issue since more employees were needed at the beginning of the month to manage the high demand but fewer were required toward the end of the month when the demand was significantly reduced. Since 2010, after Voices for Illinois Children, the Illinois Retail Merchants Association and the Illinois Food Retailers Association raised the issue, the Illinois Department of Human Services has added three

additional dates to the SNAP distribution schedule. As a result of this change to the distribution schedule, grocers reported observing an improvement in the distribution of store traffic throughout the month.

## RECOMMENDATION 8:

# State and local governments should partner with the grocery industry, community organizations and public health professionals to highlight and support best practices for promoting healthy foods.

The state should partner with the grocery industry and local organizations to highlight and encourage best practices for promoting healthy food choices. Studies show that many grocers, with support from community-based organizations, are already taking steps to promote healthy eating and encourage shoppers to make healthy choices. Many community organizations and public health professionals can provide relevant research and/or education models to pilot healthy in-store marketing strategies, as well as nutrition education efforts with local operators.

## *Success Stories*

**New York:** The Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF), a community development financial institution that provides innovative capital solutions to support healthy families and communities, has worked extensively with its partners Goldman Sachs and The Food Trust to promote healthy food options in supermarkets and grocery stores in New York. Supermarket Strategies to Encourage Healthy Eating is a program and corresponding toolkit for supermarket-based strategies to encourage healthy eating. The program's in-store marketing campaign provides consumers with information about healthy food options and makes those options more appealing. Food retail operators can employ a variety of strategies—including store tours, nutrition education, taste test events and health screenings—to incentivize consumers to make healthy choices in their stores.

**Tennessee:** Nashville and Chattanooga are operating mobile markets—carrying fresh produce, low-fat milk, eggs, cheeses and other staples that are commonly found in grocery stores—in communities where food insecurity is at its highest. In February 2011, students at Vanderbilt University, in partnership with community leaders, created the Nashville Mobile Market. In December 2011, the National Mobile Market was created to help replicate Nashville's operational and community outreach models.

In January 2012, the Chattanooga Mobile Market was planned by local organizations in response to the closing of multiple supermarkets. The YMCA of Chattanooga, Chattanooga Food Bank, the East and South Chattanooga Leadership Advisory Committees, Step ONE and Gaining Ground committed to the market for three years to ensure stability. Plans are underway for the market to accept SNAP benefits alongside cash, check and credit cards. Multiple other cities, including Memphis, are currently in the process of creating mobile markets.

## RECOMMENDATION 9:

State and local governments should work with transit agencies, community organizations and retailers to develop affordable and efficient transportation services for neighborhoods without convenient access to a full-service supermarket.

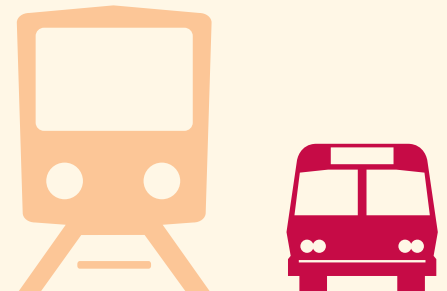
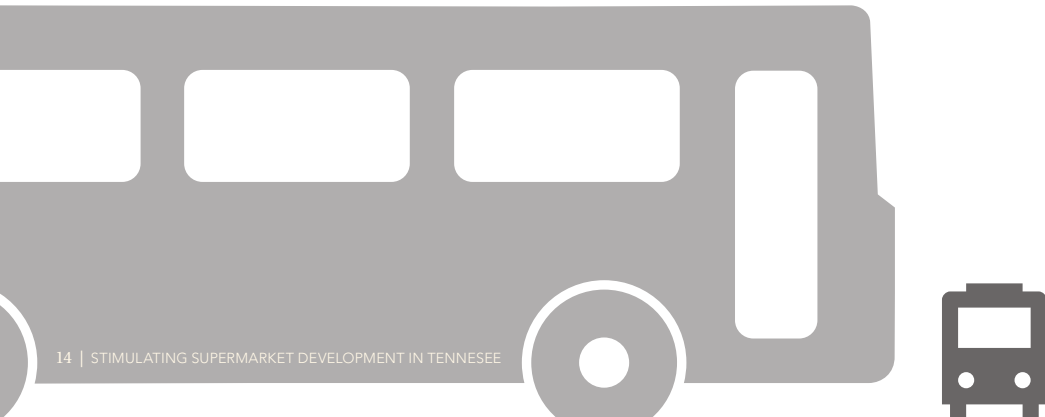
Good transportation policy should support transit for area residents to nearby grocery stores. Lower-income households are less likely than other households to own a car or live in a neighborhood with a supermarket. Regional and state transportation agencies in Tennessee should recognize when there is need for better services and create efficient ways to transport shoppers to full-service supermarkets.

## Success Stories

**Tennessee:** In Nashville, the Metropolitan Planning Organization's 25-year Regional Transportation Plan included a staff analysis of how roadways in the Nashville area can better connect residents to food retailers. The analysis was overlaid with maps that identified neighborhoods with lower-income, minority and elderly residents who would benefit from transportation links to food retailers that did not require owning a car. The Metropolitan Planning Organization included the analysis of food environments and community populations in the ranking and funding of transportation projects as one part of a comprehensive approach to promote the health and wellness of residents in the Nashville area.

**Connecticut:** In Hartford, the L-Tower Avenue Crosstown bus route plays an important role in increasing access to major supermarkets for residents who rely on public transportation. Designed as part of the Jobs Access program to link lower-income residents with jobs, shopping and medical services, the L-Tower Avenue Crosstown bus route serves the dual purpose of connecting employees to their job sites and Hartford residents to supermarkets.

**Texas:** In Austin, Capital Metro, working with the Austin/Travis County Food Policy Council, started a "grocery bus" line in 1996 to provide residents of a lower-income area with better access to area supermarkets. The bus route continues to run four days a week.





## RECOMMENDATION 10:

State and local governments should engage leaders from the grocery industry and civic sector to inform this work. They should convene state and regional advisory groups of leaders including the supermarket industry, community and economic development leaders, the financial sector, public health officials, civic sector and others to guide the implementation of these recommendations.

The active participation of public-private leadership from the grocery retail industry, public officials and the nonprofit and civic sectors has been essential to the successful redevelopment of supermarkets and other healthy, affordable food retail across the country.



### *Success Stories*

**Louisiana:** Collaboration among public and private leadership has been one of the main drivers of success of projects seeking to increase investment in new and expanded grocery stores for cities around the country. In New Orleans, the Fresh Food Retailer Initiative was launched in spring 2011 to increase access to healthy, affordable foods in traditionally underserved neighborhoods in the city. Seeds for the initiative were planted years earlier.

In 2008, the New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee (FPAC), a task force convened by The Food Trust and The Prevention Research Center at Tulane University, which included public health, economic development and supermarket industry leaders, developed 10 policy recommendations addressing ways that the city and state could support increasing supermarket and other fresh food retail development in underserved communities. At the conclusion of FPAC proceedings, key members continued to work for the implementation of recommendations. One proposal called for the development of a financing

program for supermarkets and led to the creation of the Fresh Food Retailer Initiative, which provides direct financial assistance to retail businesses by awarding forgivable and/or interest-bearing loans to supermarkets, grocery stores and other fresh food retailers. The city has provided \$7 million in Disaster Community Development Block Grant funds toward the program, which will be matched by local Community Development Financial Institution Hope Enterprise Corporation.

# CONCLUSION

Providing better access to healthy, affordable foods is an important strategy to reduce and prevent obesity and improve residents' health. Having more supermarkets and stores that sell nutritious options in underserved areas will ensure that residents of Tennessee can purchase healthy food for their families. Efforts to improve food access in the state will create needed jobs and economic opportunity for Tennesseans as well as help revitalize struggling neighborhoods.

The 10 recommendations developed by the Tennessee Grocery Access Task Force are achievable steps toward creating healthier communities in Tennessee. By working together, we can improve the health of our children and increase their ability to lead active lives.

*Efforts to improve food access in the state will create needed jobs and economic opportunity for Tennesseans as well as help revitalize struggling neighborhoods.*

The Tennessee Grocery Access Task Force encourages state and local leaders to expedite the implementation of these recommendations. As a whole, the recommendations promote a comprehensive approach to improving food access in the state.

Members of the task force are confident that success is achievable in both rural and urban communities of Tennessee. By working together Tennesseans can increase economic development in neighborhoods and support the health and well-being of children and families throughout the state.

## Selected Resources

Center for Disease Control – Overweight and Obesity  
<http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/index.html>

Center for Science in the Public Interest – Nutrition Policy  
[http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nutrition\\_policy.html#eat](http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nutrition_policy.html#eat)

Chattanooga Mobile Market  
<http://chattanoogafoodmarket.org>

City of Baltimore – Baltimore City Food Policy Initiative  
<http://www.baltimorecity.gov/Government/AgenciesDepartments/Planning/BaltimoreFoodPolicyInitiative.aspx>

City of Chicago – Shop Chicago  
[http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp\\_info/shop\\_chicago.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/shop_chicago.html)

City of Louisville – Economic Growth and Innovation Newsroom  
<http://www.louisvilleky.gov/economicdevelopment/News/2012/FirstChoiceMarketOpensinParkDuValle.htm>

City of Philadelphia – Philadelphia Food Charter  
[http://www.phila.gov/green/greenworks/equity\\_LocalFood.html](http://www.phila.gov/green/greenworks/equity_LocalFood.html)

Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles  
<http://www.crala.org/internet-site/About/index.cfm>

Community Health and Food Access: Local Government Role  
<http://bookstore.icma.org/freedocs/E43398.pdf>

Illinois Food Retailer Association  
<http://www.ilfood.org>

The Low Income Investment Fund – Healthy Food Healthy Communities Program  
<http://www.liifund.org/programs/healthy%20food>

Metropolitan Planning Organization  
[http://www.nashvillempo.org/plans\\_programs/rtp/default.aspx](http://www.nashvillempo.org/plans_programs/rtp/default.aspx)

National Conference of State Legislatures: Obesity Statistics in the United States  
<http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/health/obesity-statistics-in-the-united-states.aspx>

Potluck, Sarah. (2012) "New Jersey's Fresh Food Initiative receives \$12 million to support underserved cities." The Star-Ledger. [http://www.nj.com/business/index.ssf/2012/03/new\\_jersey\\_fresh\\_food\\_initiati.html](http://www.nj.com/business/index.ssf/2012/03/new_jersey_fresh_food_initiati.html)

Pulse, Lorain County's Magazine (Fall 2008). Project Employee Training. <http://www.pulselorainmag.com>

The Food Trust – Food For Every Child: The Need for More Supermarkets in Tennessee  
<http://www.thefoodtrust.org/php/programs/super.market.campaign.php>

The Food Trust – Supermarket Campaign in Louisiana  
<http://www.thefoodtrust.org/php/programs/supermarket-LA.php>

The Reinvestment Fund – Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative  
[http://www.trfund.com/resource/downloads/Fresh\\_Food\\_Financing\\_Initiative\\_Comprehensive.pdf](http://www.trfund.com/resource/downloads/Fresh_Food_Financing_Initiative_Comprehensive.pdf)

Treuhaut, S and Karpyn, A. (2010) The Grocery Gap: Who Has Access to Healthy Food and Why it Matters. Oakland, Ca: PolicyLink and The Food Trust

Uplift Solutions  
<http://www.upliftsolutions.org>

## Ensuring That Everyone Has Access To Affordable, Nutritious Food

The Food Trust, a nationally recognized nonprofit founded in Philadelphia in 1992, strives to make healthy food available to all. Research has shown that lack of access to healthy food has a profound impact on food choices and, therefore, a profound impact on health.

For 20 years, The Food Trust has worked with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers and policymakers to develop a comprehensive approach to improving the health of America's children. The Food Trust's innovative initiatives integrate nutrition education with increased availability of affordable, healthy foods.

This approach has been shown to reduce the incidence of childhood overweight; a study in the journal *Pediatrics* found that the agency's School Nutrition Policy Initiative resulted in a 50 percent reduction in the incidence of overweight among Philadelphia school children.

The Food Trust is recognized as a regional and national leader in the prevention of childhood obesity and other diet-related diseases for this and other notable initiatives to increase food access in underserved neighborhoods, including the Healthy Corner Store Initiative and the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative, a public-private partnership which has approved funding for 90 fresh-food retail projects across Pennsylvania.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention honored the Fresh Food Financing Initiative in its Showcase of Innovative Policy and Environmental Strategies for Obesity Prevention and Control, and the program was named one of the Top 15 Innovations in American Government by Harvard University. For more information or to order additional copies of this report, visit [thefoodtrust.org](http://thefoodtrust.org) or contact The Food Trust.

*For 20 years, The Food Trust has worked with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers and policymakers to develop a comprehensive approach to improving the health of America's children.*

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