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# **2016-2017**

# **Cuyahoga County**

# **Community Food Assessment**

## Part 1: Current Conditions

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Introduction</b>   | 2  |
| <b>About this Report</b>  | 4  |
| <b>Overview: Prior Food Access Studies</b>  | 5  |
| <b>Key Terms and Definitions</b>  | 6  |
| <b>Community Food Assessment Methodology</b>  | 10 |
| <b>Community Profiles</b>   | 10 |
| <b>Food Access and Distribution Resources</b>   | 11 |
| <b>Next Steps</b>   | 11 |
| <b>Appendix A: Community Profiles-Cuyahoga County Communities</b>                           |    |
| <b>Appendix B: Community Profiles-City of Cleveland / Statistical Planning Areas (SPAs)</b> |    |

## INTRODUCTION

The *Creating Healthy Communities* Initiative brings together community coalitions to identify, implement and evaluate interventions aimed at reducing the leading causes of death including heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and chronic lower respiratory disease by focusing on policy, environmental, and system changes aimed at modifiable risk factors such as physical activity, nutrition and obesity, cholesterol and blood pressure.

Since the *Creating Healthy Communities* Initiative began in 2010, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (CCPC, or County Planning) has assisted the Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) with carrying out the objectives of the *Creating Healthy Communities* Initiative in community settings (the Cities of East Cleveland, Euclid, and Lakewood) and County-wide in order to reduce health inequities by (1) examining health issues related to the built environment and land use barriers; (2) focusing on strategies to improve the built environment as a means of promoting healthy behaviors and (3) facilitating policy, systems, and environmental changes to promote healthy eating and physical activity. County Planning provides contractual professional planning services that include facilitation, outreach, and technical assistance such as GIS-based mapping.

For 2016 and 2017, the Cuyahoga County Board of Health and County Planning are focusing their efforts on increasing access to healthy food—especially as provided by full-service grocery stores in Low Income Areas. Two noteworthy initiatives are providing the incentive and guidance to achieve this goal. The first is the Healthy Food for Ohio (HFFO) program created by the Finance Fund Capital Corporation (FCAP). The HFFO was created in part to address the findings of a 2014 statewide mapping study, *“Food for Every Child: The Need for Healthy Food Financing in Ohio.”* This study identified rural and urban areas where nearly one million adults and 250,000 children live at the confluence of low supermarket access, low income, and high rates of diet-related death. The HFFO asserts that by providing underserved communities with access to retailers that offer a variety of fresh, affordable and nutritious foods, the initiative will encourage a more nutritiously balanced diet and enable people living on limited budgets to purchase higher quality foods. Other benefits to the community include job creation, contribution to the local tax base, and attracting additional businesses to the area.

Secondly, Health Improvement Partnership-Cuyahoga (HIP-Cuyahoga) released the *Cuyahoga County Community Health Improvement Plan* in 2015. This Plan, which included a Community Health Needs Assessment, a Community Themes and

Strengths Assessment, and a series of HIP-Cuyahoga prioritization meetings, noted that many areas throughout the County--and especially in Cleveland's core and inner-ring suburbs—lack grocery stores that sell fresh fruits and vegetables.

Through the planning process, the Partnership identified and addressed Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) as a key priority, and noted that Countywide:

- One in four adults is obese;
- Residents named obesity as one of the top five health issues on the HIP-Cuyahoga Quality of Life Survey;
- Residents lack access to transportation, safe places for physical activity, and places to purchase fresh meats and produce;
- Only 25% of adults reported meeting the recommended fruit and vegetable consumption; and
- About 50% of all Cleveland residents, and 25% of all Cuyahoga County residents live in a “food desert.”
- Of the Cleveland residents living in a food desert, 60% describe themselves as “non-white.”

The *Cuyahoga County Community Health Improvement Plan* is very clear about the importance of healthy food retail in underserved communities, and outlines specific goals designed to improve equitable food access.

## **ABOUT THIS REPORT**

The 2016-2017 Community Food Assessment is a two-part project. The first part, included in the 2016 Scope of Work, focused on data-gathering. The second part, to be completed in the 2017 Scope of Work, will focus on data assessment, analysis, and dissemination. This 2016 report includes a brief overview of prior Cuyahoga County food access studies. It also includes community profiles (socioeconomic and demographic), food resource maps and data (locations and types of food distribution resources) for each Cuyahoga County community and City of Cleveland Statistical Planning Area (SPA), key terms and definitions, and a description of the study methodology.

The 2016-2017 Cuyahoga County Community Food Assessment Report is designed to provide accurate, meaningful, and up-to-date mapping and data to the Cuyahoga County Board of Health and its many partners identified in the Health Improvement Plan-Cuyahoga. It is expected that this report will prove to be an invaluable resource to food resource stakeholders throughout the County. At a minimum, this report can be used for the following purposes:

- Identify those Cuyahoga County communities and Cleveland neighborhoods lacking access to full-service grocery stores;
- Provide data to assist local partners gain resources to support healthy food access efforts;
- Provide data to assist local policymakers to incentivize grocery store development;
- Establish benchmarks and trend information regarding healthy food access and food deserts over time; and
- Locate access points for local emergency food resources.

## OVERVIEW: PRIOR FOOD ACCESS STUDIES

In Cuyahoga County, access to healthy and affordable food is highly dependent on the community in which residents live. The geographic inequities to food access, combined with other factors, diminish both positive health and economic impacts in these communities. Understanding food access is important because studies show that access to healthy foods impacts diet-related diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, innovation in food access, food marketing, transportation, and community health promotion can foster economic development and retail opportunities in low-income and underserved communities.

Over the last ten years, the Cuyahoga County Board of Health and County Planning collaborated on two prior food assessment studies. In April 2008, County Planning first presented findings of an analysis of local food deserts to the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition. This analysis included an inventory of retail food establishments (including full-service grocery stores)--as well as areas of concentrations of fast food—in order to identify food deserts.

The Board of Health and County Planning, in 2012, published the follow-up study, *Cuyahoga County Assessment: Access to Supermarkets in 2011*. The *Assessment* focused solely on access to fresh and healthy foods; the study also reclassified “major” grocery stores to include more mid-sized stores, and created a clear definition of low-income areas. Other factors considered in the study included the physical distance from stores that provide healthy food options, income, and access to transportation.

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<sup>1</sup> Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food: Measuring and Understanding Food Deserts and Their Consequences, United States Department of Agriculture [https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/ap036/12703\\_ap036d\\_1\\_.pdf](https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/ap036/12703_ap036d_1_.pdf)

## KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The following terms and definitions are essential for understanding the goals and objectives of the Health Improvement Plan-Cuyahoga (HIP-C) report and the Healthy Food Fund Ohio (HFFO) program, and will be used as appropriate to inform and guide the Community Food Assessment.

**African American Population:** Defined in this study as “Race alone or in combination with one or more races – Black or African American”. Some health outcomes have a correlation to African Americans as a racial group.

**Community Food Assessment:** A collaborative and participatory process that systematically examines a broad range of community food issues and assets, and so inform change actions to make the community more food secure.  
([http://foodsecurity.org/CFS\\_projects.pdf](http://foodsecurity.org/CFS_projects.pdf) )

**Community Garden:** A plot of land that is gardened by a group of people to produce fruits, vegetables, flowers, and sometimes chickens for egg production. Community gardens exist in a variety of settings, urban and rural, on vacant lots, at schools or community centers, or on donated land. Food may be grown communally, or individuals or families may have individual garden plots or beds.  
(<http://guides.library.cornell.edu/c.php?g=31298&p=199469>)

**Chronic Disease:** Conditions that keep coming back, or persistent conditions that are the nation’s leading causes of death and disability (i.e., high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, heart problems, and mental illness). Most of the time, these conditions could have been prevented. They can lead to lifelong disability, and negatively impact an individual’s quality of life due to high health care costs.

**Equity:** Providing all people with fair opportunities to achieve their full potential.

**Farmers Market:** A common facility or area where several farmers or growers gather on a regular, recurring basis to sell a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables and other locally-grown farm products directly to consumers. Related Term: Certified Farmers Market -Some states offer or require certification of farmers markets to ensure that the products sold are produced by the farmers themselves.  
(<http://guides.library.cornell.edu/c.php?g=31298&p=199469>)

**Food Deserts:** Urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Instead of supermarkets and grocery stores, these communities may have no food access or access only to fast food restaurants and convenience stores that offer few healthy and affordable food options.

NOTE: For the purposes of this study, a Food Desert is defined as any Low Income Area (see below) that is more than one-half mile from a supermarket.

**Food Distribution and Assistance Resources:** Programs that strengthen food security through commodity distribution and nutrition assistance to low-income families and other eligible individuals. (<https://www.nutrition.gov/food-assistance-programs/food-distribution-programs>)

- **Food Banks:** Food Banks are distribution hubs. They supply the food to the soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, and other similar facilities. They in turn provide that food to the individuals that need it. (<http://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org/foodbanks/OHfoodbanks.html>)
- **Food Pantry:** A location, organization or group that sorts and packages donated foodstuffs for distribution directly to people in need. (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/food+pantry>)
- **Hot Meal Site:** Locations that offer a place to sit down and eat a hot and nutritious meal\* (\*Food services and times are subject to change)
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** Federal nutrition assistance program that offers benefits to low-income individuals and families and provides economic benefits to communities.
- **USDA** (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>)

**Food Insecurity:** Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways. (<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/measurement.aspx>)

**Healthy Food Financing Initiative:** The federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) supports projects that increase access to healthy, affordable food in communities that currently lack these options.



**Income Density:** All the income for all the households within an area divided by the land area in square miles.

**Institutional Racism:** Discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and practices, and inequitable opportunities and influence within organizations and institutions, based on race.

**Life Expectancy:** The average number of years a population of a certain age is expected to live, given a set of age-specific death rates in a given year.

**Large Grocery Store:** Generally a smaller chain or non-chain store that offers fewer options when compared to a Supermarket. Large Grocery Stores typically offer at least six (6) varieties of fresh fruits/vegetables and offers low-fat milk as an option. Additionally, they offer raw meat (cut in store) and bakery (baked in store), and have five (5) or fewer cash registers. Examples include Marc's and Aldi.

**Low Income Area:** Defined by the State of Ohio eligibility standard for Food Pantry use, and includes households earning less than 200% of the Federal poverty guideline.

NOTE: For the purposes of this study, any area where more than 30% of the households earn less than 200% of the poverty guideline will be considered a Low Income Area. Further, those areas that are not Low Income Areas by this definition will not be considered part of a Food Desert; it can be assumed that higher income households can readily afford to travel to a store farther than one-half mile away.

**Minority Population:** Defined in this study as "Total Population" minus "White Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino". This measure correlates to racial and ethnic biases that affect standard of living and choice of neighborhoods.

**Small Grocery Store:** A smaller store without a variety of departments (deli, bakery, etc.) that offers at least one variety of milk and at least two (2) varieties of fresh fruits/vegetables.

**Supermarket:** Large store selling a variety of groceries including: raw meat, baked goods, at least eleven (11) varieties of both fresh fruits/vegetables, and three (3) varieties of milk (including low-fat). Also offers a variety of household goods and other services such as a pharmacy. Local examples include Giant Eagle, Heinen's and Dave's.

**Statistical Planning Area (SPA):** SPAs are geographic areas defined by the City of Cleveland Planning Commission in conjunction with community organizations and residents. The SPAs are a combination of contiguous census blocks within the City, and are defined by generally accepted neighborhood boundaries within each area. There are thirty-four (34) SPAs in the City of Cleveland.  
(<http://neocando.case.edu/cando/index.jsp?tPage=geog>)

**Structural Racism:** Racial bias across and within society. The cumulative and compounded effects of factors such as public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms that often reinforce and perpetuate racial inequity.

**Transportation Access:** Access to affordable and reliable transportation is essential to addressing poverty, unemployment, and other equal opportunity goals such as access to healthy food, good schools, and health care services.  
(<http://www.civilrights.org/transportation/>)

**Urban or Suburban Sprawl:** The expansion of human populations away from central urban areas into areas with less population density; car-dependent communities.

## **COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

This *2016-2017 Cuyahoga County Community Food Assessment* report is a two-part study that will be used to understand the feasibility of new full-service grocery store development within underserved areas in Cuyahoga County.

Part 1: Current Conditions provides a snapshot of each community in Cuyahoga County, and includes profiles of socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, as well as an inventory of resources related to food availability.

Part 2: Resource Analysis will be the next step in the study. Since supermarkets may not be the only source for healthy food in a neighborhood, further examination of community food production and distribution resources, and food-related policies affecting the communities, will also be assessed.

### **PART 1: CURRENT CONDITIONS**

#### **Community Profiles**

Data was gathered for each Cuyahoga County city, village, and township, and for each Statistical Planning Area within the City of Cleveland, since these communities vary considerably in their demographics, geography, and development patterns. This series of community profiles explores a number of variables associated with food insecurity such as income levels and access to transportation. Most information provided in the profiles was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) for the period 2010-2014. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) statistics were collected from NEO CANDO (Northeast Ohio Community and Neighborhood Data for Organizing). The profiles include the following categories:

- Population;
- Race and Ethnicity;
- Housing Tenure;
- Gender;
- Vehicle Access;
- Unemployment;
- Household Income;
- Poverty; and
- SNAP statistics.

For community-level reporting, Census data was obtained at the "Subdivision" and "Place" level. For Cleveland Statistical Planning Areas, Census data was obtained at

the block group level, and disaggregated to census block level using proportions of population and households from the 2010 Census, then re-aggregated for each SPA. As a result, median income was not available at the neighborhood level.

### **Food Access and Distribution Resources**

In addition to community profiles, maps were made to highlight the availability of affordable and nutritious food to Cuyahoga County residents. For the analysis of food access and resources, only “Supermarkets” and “Large Grocery Stores” were included. Stores were classified using definitions provided by the Prevention Research Center at Case Western Reserve University (see **KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**). A variety of social programs and public benefits exist to help food-insecure people gain better access to food resources. A comprehensive inventory of food distribution and assistance sites is included in each community profile; the inventory provides the full range of available resources throughout the County. These supplemental food resources include:

- Summer Sprout Sites;
- Suburban and School Community Gardens;
- Botanical Gardens Green Corps Sites;
- Farmer’s Markets;
- Greater Cleveland Foodbank Facilities;
- Hunger Network Facilities; and
- Schools with Free and Reduced Price Meals.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The maps and data were presented in early December, 2016, to the Cuyahoga County Board of Health and various food access stakeholders (Ohio State University Extension, Greater Cleveland Food Bank, Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland, and the Prevention Research Center at Case Western Reserve University) for review and feedback. As a result of that discussion, several key terms were revised as follows:

- A “Food Desert”, in this study, is defined as any low-income area that is more than one half mile from a supermarket or large grocery store;
- A “Low-income Area” is defined using the State of Ohio’s eligibility standard for Food Pantry use, and includes households earning less than 200% of the federal poverty guideline. Further, for the purposes of this study, any area where more than 30% of the population earns less than 200% of the poverty guideline is a considered a “low income area”. Just as importantly, those areas that are not low income by this definition will not be considered part of a “food

desert”, since it can be assumed that higher income households can readily afford to travel to a store further than one-half mile away; and

- Distance from grocery was determined by travel along the established street network. GIS software was used to delineate concentric “service areas” at ½ mile intervals, from ½ mile to 2 miles from each store. Demographics were tabulated for each of these service areas and corresponding gap areas to identify the communities and neighborhoods that would benefit from food policy interventions.

This report will be the basis for a continuing analysis of food accessibility in Cuyahoga County. The next phase of this study (Part 2: Resource Analysis, to commence in early 2017), will focus on data assessment, analysis, and dissemination. It is anticipated that the results of this work will assist communities in identifying and eliminating existing barriers to grocery store development, while at the same time, provide opportunities to examine policy changes for land use, financing resources, and overall economic development that can support an enhanced local food economy and improve individual and community health.

## Appendix A: Community Profiles-Cuyahoga County Communities

## Appendix B: Community Profiles-City of Cleveland / Statistical Planning Areas (SPAs)