



Source: Master Class via People

# FOOD DESERTS

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### SDG #2

- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

### SDG #3

- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

## POSSIBLE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Who are the people that live in food deserts and what happens to them?
- What are some strategies people and communities are using to bring healthier food options to food deserts?
- How can food deserts exist right next to communities with plenty of healthy foods?
- Do people with access to good food have a responsibility to those who do not have that same access?

## BACKGROUND

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, food deserts are defined as urban neighborhoods and rural areas without access to fresh, healthy and affordable food for the population living there. With no supermarkets, grocery stores or farmer's markets, these communities may have only fast food restaurants or small convenience stores that do not carry fresh produce or other healthy food options. The lack of access to safe and nutritious foods can contribute to a poor diet and lead to higher levels of obesity, heart-disease and other diet-related diseases.

In many urban areas across the United States – from Detroit to Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and elsewhere – food deserts pose a real threat to the health of millions of Americans every day. As of 2017, nearly 39.5 million people, or 12.8% of the U.S. population, live in low-income and low-access areas. The United States is one of the richest countries in the world, with a wealth of resources and access to food, yet millions of people still lack the access to healthy and nutritious food.

This case study will examine two major urban areas in the United States, Detroit and California (LA and the Bay Area specifically), and look at the major health risks and socio-economic issues that are a result of food deserts.

## RESOURCES

### Personal Stories

- [Place Matters: Food Deserts - Clint Smith \(The Society Pages\)](#)
- [Small Plates: Five Personal Stories of Food Insecurity in Metropolitan Detroit \(Fair Food Network\)](#)
- [The New Face of Hunger: Three Stories \(National Geographic\)](#)

### Articles

- [Food Deserts in the United States \(The Annie E. Casey Foundation\)](#)
- [Why it takes more than a grocery store to eliminate a 'food desert' \(PBS\)](#)
- [The Socio-Economic Significance of Food Deserts \(PBS\)](#)
- [Transforming Food Deserts and Swamps to Fight Obesity \(Huffington Post\)](#)
- [California Food Deserts: Nearly 1 Million Live Far from Supermarkets, Grocery Stores \(Huffington Post\)](#)
- [Food Truck Pioneer Battles Food Deserts with High Cuisine \(NPR\)](#)
- [Eliminating Food Deserts Will Take A Marriage of Private and Public Enterprise \(Huffington Post\)](#)
- [Detroit's 'food deserts' are a burden for many \(The South End\)](#)
- [What are food deserts, and how do they impact health? \(Medical News Today\)](#)

### Websites

- [Food Access Research Atlas \(USDA\)](#)
- [America's Food Deserts \(The Daily Good\)](#)

- [Detroit Food Map](#)
- [Food Deserts in South LA \(Story Maps\)](#)

### Data

- [Hunger Data \(California Association of Food Banks\)](#)
- [Struggling to Make Ends Meet: Food Insecurity in CA \(CA Food Policy Advocates\)](#)

### Visual & Audio

- [Video: Food Forward Pilot: Urban Farming - PBS](#)
- [Audio: "Detroit Truck Responds To City's Food Desert Crisis" \(NPR\)](#)
- [Video: A guerilla gardener in South Central LA \(TED Talk\)](#)
- [Supermarkets don't go to 'food deserts \(Bay Area\) \(Marketplace\)](#)
- [How Detroit Chefs Are Feeding Those In Need \(NPR\)](#)

