

THE HEALTHY CONVENIENCE STORE PROJECT



PROVIDED BY:



Southern Illinois Healthy Convenience Store Project: A Toolkit for LHDs, Organizers and Store Owners

This toolkit was developed for Southern Illinois local health departments and community organizers to assist in encouraging local convenience stores to adopt healthier food choices.

For more information, please contact:

Questions specific to the toolkit:

Jackson County Health Department

Miriam Link-Mullison

miriamlm@jchdonline.org

618-684-3143 x100

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The Project

This project focuses on making healthy food more accessible to rural residents, particularly those who must travel a long distance to grocery shopping. Residents in these areas must rely on convenience stores for grocery shopping in between periodic supermarket shopping trips. As a result, making healthy food available to these residents depends on improving what is stocked on the shelves of convenience stores. This project attempts to address this problem by encouraging retailers to incorporate more healthy food options into their stores through a healthy convenience store program.

Who We Are:

The Healthy Southern Illinois Delta Network (HSIDN) is a grassroots effort established to build consensus on the health needs of residents in southernmost Illinois.

The Network brings together local health departments, area health centers, hospitals and others interested in improving the health of their communities. Members work together to support healthy communities in the lower sixteen counties in Illinois.

HSIDN members include Southern Illinois Healthcare, the Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development and the area's six health departments covering a fifteen county region. Regional efforts are coordinated by the steering committee and implemented at the local level through healthy community coalitions. Coalition members and action teams engage their communities to conduct activities and advance the overall mission of the HSIDN.

For more information, visit our website at <http://www.hsidn.org/>.

The Need for Healthier Foods

This toolkit resulted from a needs assessment conducted in the Fall 2014 aimed at measuring the availability of healthy foods in convenience stores located in Southern Illinois. Particular attention was paid to areas that a supermarket may be too far away for regular shopping. In the absence of a nearby supermarket, residents in these areas must rely on convenience stores for grocery shopping for periodic supermarket shopping trips. As a result, the immediate availability of healthy food for these residents depends on what is available in these convenience stores.

Healthy Food Availability

The needs assessment for this study involved collecting data on healthy food availability and prices in 96 convenience stores located in rural and completely rural areas in the Southern 16 counties. A list of all convenience stores in the 16 county area was obtained with the assistance of Local Health Departments and other data sources. A convenience store was defined as meeting two criteria. The first involved the physical characteristics and functionality of the store. Based on this criteria a convenience store was a store that offered fuel and food items. These stores fell short of a small grocery store in that their retail food sales were under \$1 million annually. When examining all convenience stores, markets, and supermarkets, a clear distinction could be made between the three types of establishments.

The results of this needs assessment indicate convenience stores in these areas offer a narrow selection of healthy foods. These healthy food choices are limited, resulting in a fresh food desert environment in large parts of this region. The main findings are as follow:

- Fresh fruit was offered in roughly half of the stores surveyed (43 out of 96).
- Bananas and apples were the most common fresh fruits offered. A limited number of stores offered oranges in addition to bananas and apples. These items were normally offered in a display by the checkout next to other snack items. The quantity of bananas and apples available were limited, with only a handful of each item available.
- Fresh vegetables were found less frequently (17 out of 96 stores). Traditional franchise convenience stores such as Huck's, Motomart and Casey's did not offer fresh vegetables, rather they were primarily found in Russell Oil Company (ROC One Stop) stores whose retail model is more akin to a hybrid gas station grocery store.
- Wheat bread and 2% milk were widely available (90 out of the 96 stores) although in limited supply.
- Whole grain cereal was also widely available (75 out of the 96 stores) offered whole grain cereal. Stocks of this cereal were largely limited to one or two boxes.
- Prices for whole grain cereal ranged from \$1.50 to \$6.29 per box with an average price of \$4.39
- Prices for bread ranged from \$1.29 to \$2.89 per loaf with an average price of \$2.47
- Prices for milk ranged from \$3.50 to \$5.69 per gallon with an average price of \$4.01
- Prices for fresh fruit ranged from \$.50 to \$1.99 per item with an average price of \$.70
- Prices for fresh vegetables ranged from \$.89 to \$1.29 per item with an average price of \$1.09
- Nearly all stores offered canned fruit, beans or vegetables.

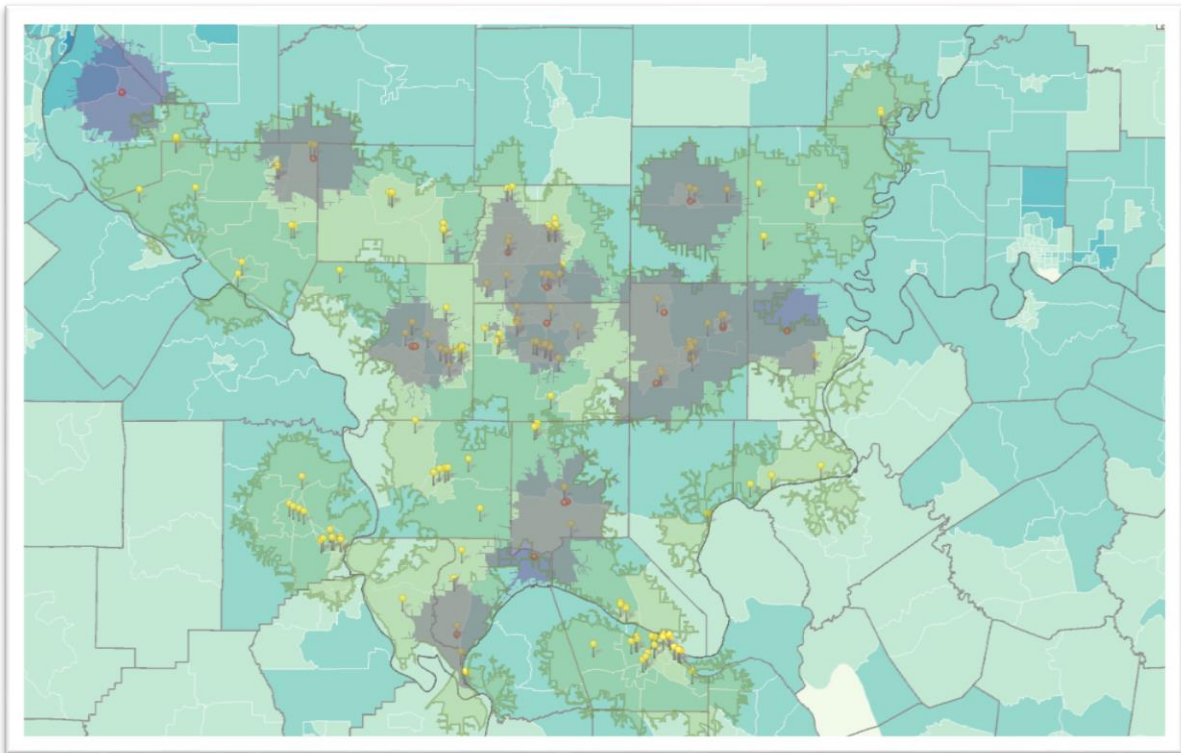
Geographic Distribution of Healthy Foods

From the needs assessment data detailed above, food deserts were identified within the region. Food desert refers to areas where a supermarket or a convenience store offering healthy foods is individuals than a 10-minute drive away. A healthy convenience store was defined as a store offering some form of fresh fruit or vegetables in addition to offering low-fat milk, whole wheat bread, and whole grain cereal.

Figure 1 below reveals food deserts in areas where residents must drive 10 miles to reach some form of healthy food either from a convenience store or a supermarket. The table below Figure 1 provides a list of all convenience stores offering some form of fresh fruit or vegetables in addition to offering low-fat milk, whole wheat bread, and whole grain cereal.

Figure 1

MAPPING THE SOUTHERN ILLINOIS FOOD ENVIRONMENT 10 Minute Driving Distance to Healthy Convenience Store or Supermarket



Legend

Drive from Supermarkets (10 Miles)



Drive from Healthy C Stores (10 Miles)



Supermarkets



Healthy C Stores



2014 USA Fruits and Vegetables Spending

Tract

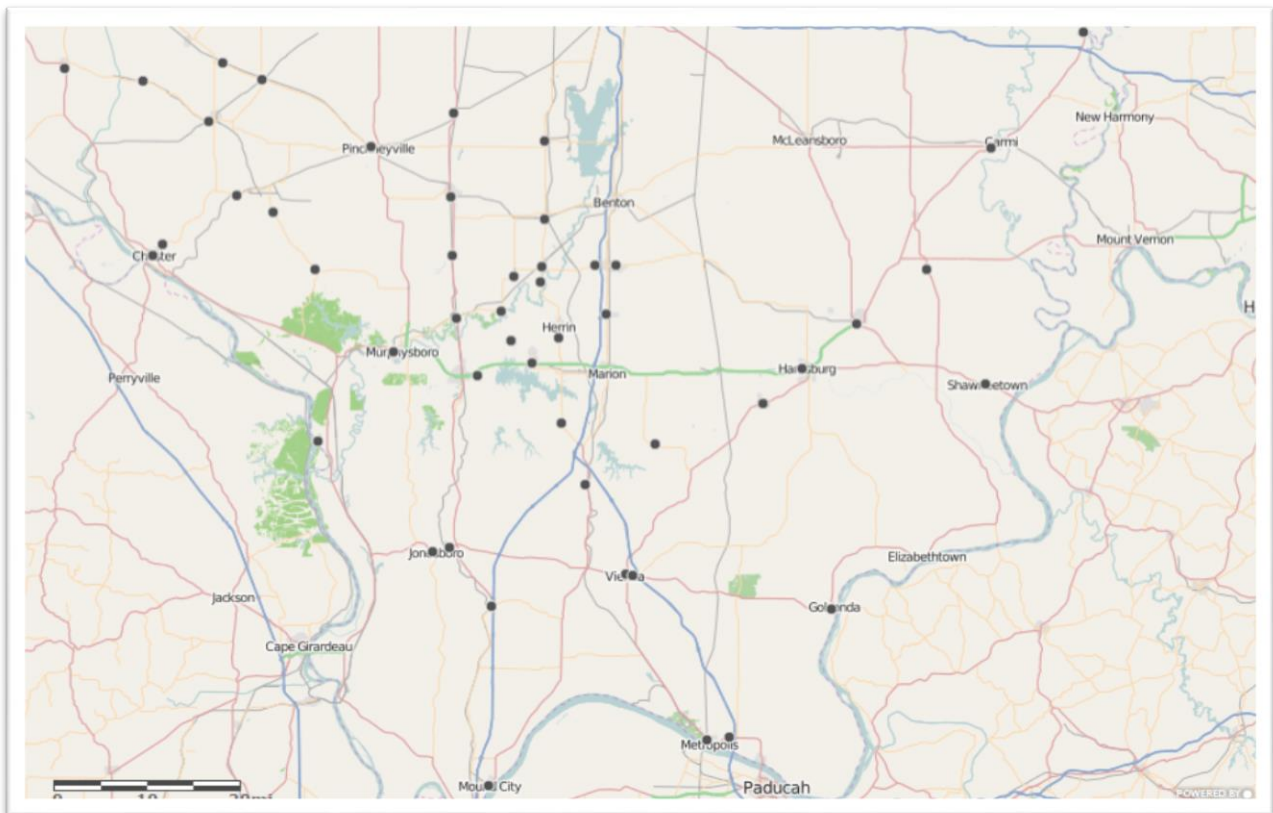
- \$ 0 - 268 per year, per household
- \$ 268 - 719 per year, per household
- \$ 719 - 1,170 per year, per household
- \$ 1,170 - 1,621 per year, per household
- \$ 1,621 - 2,072 per year, per household
- \$ 2,072 - 4,002 per year, per household

Store Name	Address	City	Zip5	County
Russell Oil Company Roc One Stop 13	1201 W Main St	West Frankfort	62896	FRANKLIN
Russell Oil Company Roc One Stop 7	100 E Randolph St	McLeansboro	62859	HAMILTON
RUSSELL OIL CO QUICK MART	415 MAIN ST	ROSICLARE	62982	HARDIN
Russell Oil Company Roc One Stop 11	531 E Vine St	Vienna	62995	JOHNSON
Russell Oil Company Roc One Stop 12	201 N 1st St	Vienna	62995	JOHNSON
MOUNDS STOP & SHOP INC	304 S Blanche St	Mounds	62964	PULASKI
RUSSELL OIL CO - GALATIA	200 E MAIN ST	GALATIA	62935	SALINE
Russell Oil Company-Roc One Stop 4	1100 Rt 45 North	Eldorado	62930	SALINE
Russell Oil Company Roc One Stop 8	409 N Commercial St	Harrisburg	62946	SALINE
Russell Oil Company-roc One Stop 2	7145 Rt 45 South	Carrier Mills	62917	SALINE
Russell Oil Company-roc One Stop 3	1001 State St	Eldorado	62930	SALINE
Russell Oil Company Roc One Stop 9	1100 W Broadway Blvd	Johnston City	62951	WILLIAMSON
Circle K 1351	500 N Victor St	Christopher	62822	FRANKLIN
Ridgway Quik Mart	105 W Main St	Ridgway	62979	GALLATIN
Circle K 1357	111 E Walnut St	Murphysboro	62966	JACKSON
Murphysboro Motomart 3137	110 S Williams St	Murphysboro	62966	JACKSON
WILSON FOOD MART	106 WASHINGTON	KARNAK	62956	PULASKI
Circle K 1358	102 E Grant St	Coulterville	62237	RANDOLPH
OLNEY MOTOMART 3120	1219 S West St	Olney	62450	RICHLAND

Using the healthy convenience store criteria the needs assessment identified the convenience stores in Southern Illinois in need of improving health food offerings. These stores are displayed in Figure 2 below on a map of Southern Illinois and listed by County.

Figure 2

DISTRIBUTION OF CONVENIENCE STORES IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS OFFERING MINIMAL OR NO HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS



Store Name	Address	City	Zip5	County
CASEY'S 1909	1305 E Main St	W Frankfort	62896	FRANKLIN
CASEY'S 2388	310 N Christopher Rd	Zeigler	62999	FRANKLIN
Casey's General Store 1633	119 N Main St	Royalton	62983	FRANKLIN
Casey's General Store 2040	10846 State Highway 149	W Frankfort	62896	FRANKLIN

Casey's General Store 2053	202 S Park St	Sesser	62884	FRANKLIN
Casey's General Store 2059	502 S Victor St	Christopher	62822	FRANKLIN
Zeigler Petro	407 S Main St	Zeigler	62999	FRANKLIN
Shawnee Quick Mart Inc.	111 W Shawnee Ave	Shawneetown	62984	GALLATIN
OMAHA 1 STOP	644 3rd St	Omaha	62871	GALLATIN
Fleetwoods General St 1	11005 Highway 4	Ava	62907	JACKSON
Grassy General Store	8022 Grassy Rd	Carbondale	62902	JACKSON
4 Way Quik Stop	200 N Chestnut St	De Soto	62924	JACKSON
CARDINAL CORNER	409 GRAND TOWER RD	GRAND TOWER	62942	JACKSON
CASEY'S 1891	2136 Walnut St	Murphysboro	62966	JACKSON
CASEY'S 2091	150 N Giant City Rd	Carbondale	62902	JACKSON
CASEY'S 2216	16060 Cambria Rd	De Soto	62924	JACKSON
Casey's General Store 1727	314 N 4th St	Elkville	62932	JACKSON
Handy Mart LLC	201 S Chestnut St	De Soto	62924	JACKSON
CASEY'S 2373	306 N 1st St	Vienna	62995	JOHNSON
Cheers Food And Fuel 250	612 E Vine St	Vienna	62995	JOHNSON
H & H Fuel Inc	220 S Broadway	Goreville	62939	JOHNSON
CASEY'S 1926	512 W 10th St	Metropolis	62960	MASSAC
Cheers Food And Fuel Metropolis 210	2105 E 5th St	Metropolis	62960	MASSAC
CASEY'S 1635	215 S Walnut St	Tamaroa	62888	PERRY
CASEY'S 2160	747 Kennedy Dr	Pinckneyville	62274	PERRY
Casey's General Store 1856	614 S Washington St	Du Quoin	62832	PERRY
Fleetwoods General Stores Inc	981 State Hwy 4	Willisville	62997	PERRY
GOLCONDA GAS N GO	121 N ADAMS	GOLCONDA	62938	POPE
Cut Mart 7	201 Main St	Mound City	62963	PULASKI
CASEY'S 1774	1226 State St	Chester	62233	RANDOLPH
CASEY'S 2042	710 Butler St	Tilden	62292	RANDOLPH
CASEY'S 2345	2431 State St	Chester	62233	RANDOLPH
Casey's General Store 1634	209 W Grant	Coulterville	62237	RANDOLPH
Casey's General Store 2321	710 W Broadway St	Sparta	62286	RANDOLPH
Casey's General Store 2396	118 W Broadway	Steeleville	62288	RANDOLPH

Casey's General Store 2446	103 E Myrtle St	Baldwin	62217	RANDOLPH
Red Bud Motomart 3121	900 S Main St	Red Bud	62278	RANDOLPH
CASEY'S 1746	1002 E Main St	Olney	62450	RICHLAND
CASEY'S 2165	6644 US 45 S	Carrier Mills	62917	SALINE
Casey's General Store 2286	435 W Poplar St	Harrisburg	62946	SALINE
Casey's General Store 2413	1005 US Highway 45 N	Eldorado	62930	SALINE
Village Pantry	6773 US 45 S	Carrier Mills	62917	SALINE
Casey's General Store 2073	202 E Vienna St	Anna	62906	UNION
Casey's General Store 2290	100 Willard Ferry Rd	Jonesboro	62952	UNION
Cheers Food And Fuel 235	510 NE Front St	Dongola	62926	UNION
Casey's General Store 1970	1320 W Main St	Carmi	62821	WHITE
Casey's General Store 2514	306 N Court St	Grayville	62844	WHITE
Cambria Mini Market	502 S Maple St	Cambria	62915	WILLIAMSON
CREAL SPRINGS MINI MART	100 E Keely St	Creal Springs	62922	WILLIAMSON
Carterville Motomart 3126	100 E Plaza Dr	Carterville	62918	WILLIAMSON
Casey's General Store 1857	1117 Grand Ave	Johnston City	62951	WILLIAMSON
Casey's General Store 2283	650 N Pershing St	Energy	62933	WILLIAMSON

The Need for a Retail Strategy to Encouraging Healthy Food Availability

The next step in the needs assessment involved identifying the resources LHDs and community organizations needed to encourage retailers to increase the availability of healthy foods in areas where these foods may not be easily obtained due to either travel distance or cost.

Based on a review of other programs attempting to increase healthy food availability (primarily in urban areas) it was decided that these programs could be used as a model and modified to target rural convenience stores. These programs attempted to encourage retailers to offer more healthy foods by providing technical assistance and retail strategies, aimed at making healthy foods a marketable item for retailers.

With this strategy in mind, an additional survey was conducted with the members of HSIDN to determine any potential needs or barriers to implementing this type of program through LHDs. The HSIDN members identified the following areas of need and potential barriers:

Branding

Concerns were raised that the retailers may be reluctant to offer healthy foods out of concern that they may not be appealing to their customers. This concern was addressed by proposing a uniform and identifiable branding campaign centering on healthy foods as a valuable commodity. This will convey a message to consumers that the retailer participates in the healthy stores program. An effective branding campaign can serve as a tangible good for retailers who wish to set themselves off as having a stake in the community.

Financial Incentives

Concerns were raised that retailers may be discouraged from participating in the program due to costs associated with offering healthy foods in their stores. Increasing the amount of healthy foods offered will not require a retailer to take on excess costs. However, if a retailer were interested in making an investment in their store funding is available from a number of sources. For example, the Federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) offers a funding source to support projects that increase access to healthy, affordable food in communities that currently lack these options. Through programs at the U.S. Departments of Agriculture (USDA), Health and Human Services (HHS), and Treasury's CDFI Fund, HFFI has been expanding the availability of nutritious food, including developing and equipping grocery stores, small retailers, corner stores, and farmers markets selling healthy food. There are also a number of privately financed funding streams available to retailers who wish to offer healthier food items.

For more information on funding opportunities see:

http://changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Green_for_Greens_FINAL_%28CLS_20120530%29_20120119.pdf

Provide a Conduit for Retailers to Access Assistance

Members raised concerns related to staffing and resource limitations that would limit their ability to implement this program in their communities. Participation in the healthy convenience store initiative should be as user-friendly as possible for retailers. Establishing a single access point for retailers to participate in the program receive technical assistance and gain another information is vital to moving this program forward. A number of national nonprofits operating in the healthy foods space provide technical assistance and free resources for the public health community.

Other healthy stores programs provide two types of material to the public health community and other stakeholders who will be implementing the program locally. The first is an implementation guide to help community organizations implement a food retail program that aims to impact supply and demand by working with food retailers, suppliers, and distributors, and with community residents. The second is an Adopt a Shop toolkit, which provides resources and tools for residents and small community-based organization interested in supporting a convenience store to make healthy changes. This toolkit will serve as a way to overcome limited staff resources by serving as an information resource for organizers.

Linking Healthy Food Suppliers with Retailers

Members raised concerns related to barriers retailers may experience in obtaining wholesale healthy foods. The region contains a strong foundation of healthy food sources. This can be leveraged to create a local supplier to store program-linking retailers to nearby suppliers of healthy foods.

How to Use this Toolkit

Local Health Department/Organizer Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to assist local health departments/organizers working with convenience stores to implement a healthy foods retail initiative. The materials focus on the project's implementation and ongoing management, which is categorized into four project phases:

Phase One: Store Outreach

Phase Two: Project Development

Phase Three: Project Implementation

Phase Four: Project Evaluation

A description of each phase and activities involved are found in the Project Process. Text in bold and in brackets (i.e. [Invitation Letter and Fact Sheet]) identifies templates of materials found in the Appendix. This toolkit also includes information on the technical and marketing assistance to be provided by the organizer to the Healthy Convenience Store. In order to reduce redundancies within the manual, some information is included in Part 2: Healthy Convenience Store Toolkit. It is strongly suggested that the organizer becomes familiar with the second part of this manual as well.

Healthy Convenience Store Toolkit

This section is designed specifically for the store owner as they begin to implement the program. The toolkit provides tools and techniques for how to stock and market healthy food. The toolkit also includes an educational guide for identifying healthy food items according to the USDA's Dietary Guidelines for Americans and a list of other useful resources.

Appendix

The appendix includes templates for the forms and outreach material used throughout the project. Each template can be modified as needed.