

# Illinois Food Deserts Annual Report

July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023



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## **Food Desert Definition**

For the purpose of the Illinois Public Act 100-0493<sup>1</sup>, "food desert" means a location lacking fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, in part due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers markets, or healthy food providers.

## **Food Desert Mapping**

The 2021 and 2022 Illinois Food Desert reports relied on estimates in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Access Research Atlas for 2019 that are based on a 2019 list of supermarkets, the 2010 decennial census, and the 2014-18 American Community Survey. The site is hosted by USDA<sup>2</sup> and is not updated annually. Therefore, the fiscal year 2023 Annual Food Desert Report does not have updated maps to share. However, the food access research atlas is interactive and users can search for a specific ZIP code to see if it is in a food desert (defined below). Visit the food atlas here: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>. The appendix contains data from the food access research atlas that was published in the fiscal year 2021 and fiscal year 2022 Food Desert Reports.

## **Food Deserts**

Food deserts are disproportionately found in high-poverty areas. There are many factors that contribute to causing a food desert, including transportation challenges, availability of convenience foods, income inequality, and business investment risks that contribute to stores not opening in the area.

## **Food Deserts and Chronic Disease**

Healthy diets are recommended to persons diagnosed with chronic diseases. However, living in a food desert limits access to the nutritious foods needed for a healthy diet. Obesity-related cancers account for 40% of all cancers in the U.S. Healthy food consumption is a modifiable

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<sup>1</sup> [Illinois General Assembly - Full Text of Public Act 100-0493 \(ilga.gov\)](#)

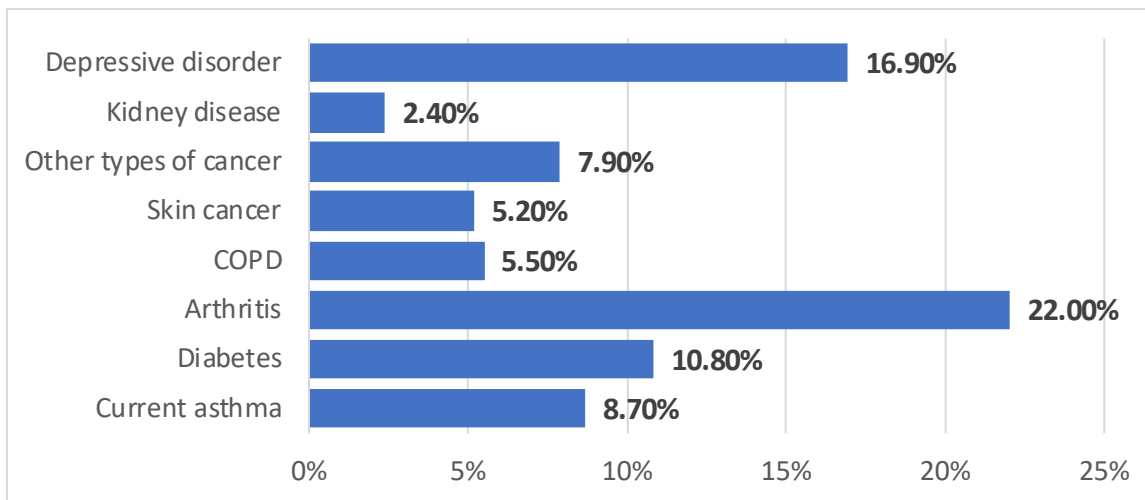
<sup>2</sup> [USDA ERS - Food Access Research Atlas](#)

factor shown to reduce obesity-related cancer mortality. A 2023 ecologic cross-sectional study that included 3,038 counties or county equivalents, found that the highest food swamp score had a 77% increased odds of high obesity-related cancer mortality<sup>3</sup>.

### Chronic Disease in Illinois

The Illinois Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey<sup>4</sup> (BRFSS) measures the self-reported prevalence of chronic diseases in adults 18 years and older. Half (50.1%) of Illinois adults have been told they have 1 of 7 chronic diseases measured by BRFSS. This includes heart disease (heart attack/stroke/angina), current asthma, any cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), arthritis, depression, and kidney disease. Arthritis is the most prevalent chronic disease reported (22.0%) followed by depression (16.9%). The BRFSS does not measure food deserts or food insecurity. The BRFSS, however, does measure chronic conditions at the county level through its county round survey. The Round 5 maps are posted on the IDPH website ([County Level Prevalence Maps \[illinois.gov\]](https://www.idph.state.il.us/county-level-prevalence-maps)). The figure below displays prevalence of chronic conditions for the state.

### Adult Chronic Disease Prevalence, Illinois, 2021



<sup>3</sup> Bevel MS, Tsai MH, Parham A, Andrzejak SE, Jones S, Moore JX. Association of Food Deserts and Food Swamps With Obesity-Related Cancer Mortality in the US. *JAMA Oncol.* 2023 Jul 1;9(7):909-916. doi: 10.1001/jamaoncol.2023.0634. PMID: 37140933; PMCID: PMC10160992.

<sup>4</sup> [Illinois Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System \(state.il.us\)](https://www.idph.state.il.us/county-level-prevalence-maps)

## How Illinois is Addressing Food Deserts

### Grocery Initiative Act

On January 1, 2024, the Grocery Initiative Act<sup>5</sup> will be effective. The bill establishes a program to distribute \$20 million in grants and technical assistance to grocery stores and to funding research into food insecurity. The grants will be awarded to grocery stores that are independently owned, including for-profit and nonprofit organizations, co-ops, and grocery stores owned by units of local government. Further, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity will study food insecurity in urban and rural food deserts.

### Illinois Fresh Food Fund

The purpose of the Illinois Fresh Food Fund<sup>6</sup> is to increase the availability of fresh food in communities and neighborhoods throughout the state. This public-private partnership is designed to achieve a reduction in the high incidence of diet-related diseases, to bring healthy food to communities that historically have not had access to fresh products, and to stimulate investment of private capital in low wealth communities. For additional information contact: Robin Broman, Senior Loan Officer, [rbroman@iff.org](mailto:rbroman@iff.org)

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<sup>5</sup> [Illinois General Assembly - Bill Status for SB0850 \(ilga.gov\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Illinois Fresh Food Fund \(IFFF\) - Urban Assistance](#)

## **Appendix**

### **Food desert terminologies defined by USDA**

#### **Low-income tract definition**

The USDA defines a low-income tract as an area with either a poverty rate of 20% or more, or a median family income less than 80% of the statewide median family income, or a tract in a metropolitan area with a median family income less than 80% of the surrounding metropolitan area median family income.

#### **Low-income and low-access tract measured at 1 mile and 10 miles definition**

According to USDA, a low-income tract with at least 500 people, or 33% of the population, living more than 1 mile (urban areas) or more than 10 miles (rural areas) from the nearest supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store.

#### **Low-income and low-access tract measured at ½ mile and 10 miles definition**

According to USDA, a low-income tract with at least 500 people, or 33% of the population, living more than ½ mile (urban areas) or more than 10 miles (rural areas) from the nearest supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store.

#### **Low-income and low-access tract measured at 1- and 20-miles definition**

According to USDA, a low-income tract with at least 500 people, or 33% of the population, living more than 1 mile (urban areas) or more than 20 miles (rural areas) from the nearest supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store.

#### **Low-income and low-access tract using vehicle access and at 20 miles definition**

A low-income tract in which at least one of the following is true: at least 100 households are located more than ½ mile from the nearest supermarket and have no vehicle access; or at least 500 people, or 33% of the population, live more than 20 miles from the nearest supermarket, regardless of vehicle availability.

**No vehicle, low access, number of housing units at 10 miles definition**

Number of housing units located more than 10 miles from the nearest supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store without access to a vehicle.

**Census Tract Maps, 2019**

Figure 1. Low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is >1 mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.

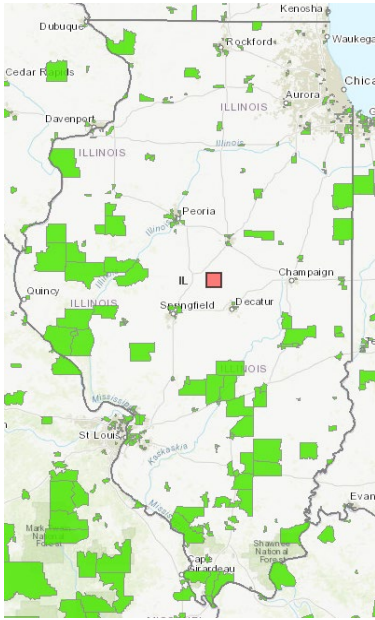


Figure 2. Low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is >1/2 mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.

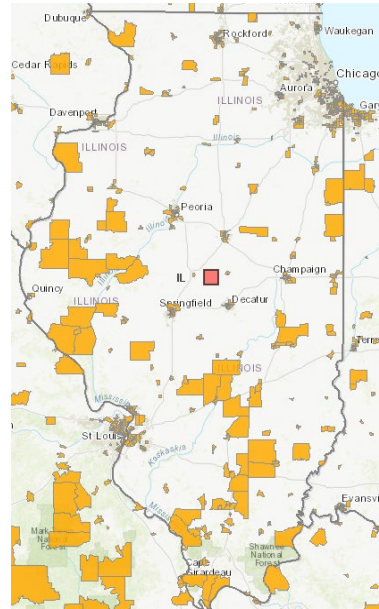


Figure 3. Low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is >1 mile (urban) or 20 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.

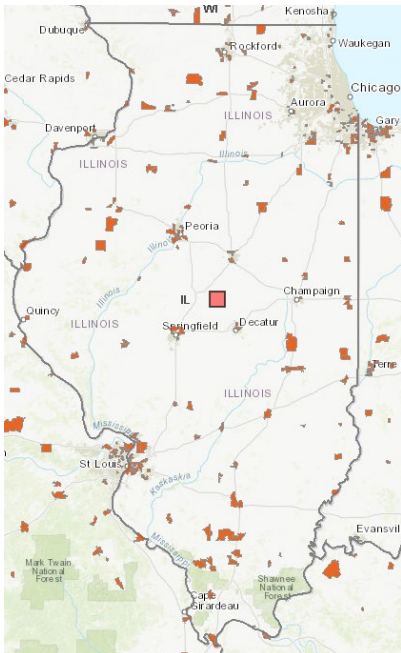
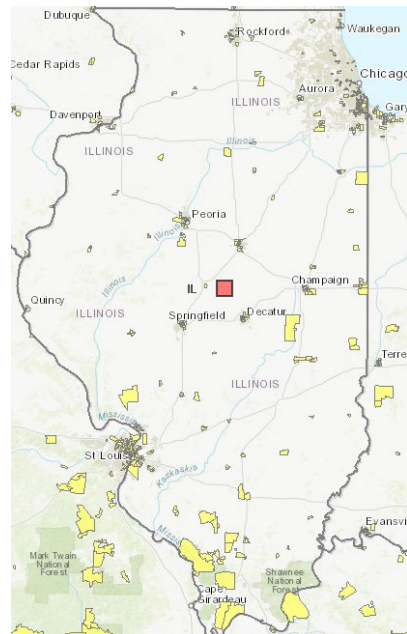


Figure 4. Low-income census tract where more than 100 housing units do not have a vehicle and are >1/2 mile from the nearest supermarket, or a significant number or residents are >20 miles from the nearest supermarket.



## County Census Tract Counts by Food Desert Level

### All Counties - Total Income and Low Access Low Tract

All counties	Low income and low access tract measured at <b>1</b> mile for urban areas and <b>10</b> miles for rural areas.	Low income and low access tract measured at <b>1/2</b> mile for urban areas and <b>10</b> miles for rural areas.	Low income and low access tract measured at <b>1</b> mile for urban areas and <b>20</b> miles for rural areas.	Low income and low access tract using vehicle access or low income and low access tract measured at 20 miles.
<b>2015</b>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>373</b>
<b>Percent of all census tracts (n=3,123)</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>
<b>2019</b>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>424</b>
<b>Percent of all census tracts (n=3,115)</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>27.9%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>

### Low income and low access tract measured at x mile for urban areas and y miles for rural areas

County	<b>1 and 10</b>	<b>Half and 10</b>	<b>1 and 20</b>	<b>Vehicle</b>
Adams	1	7	1	2
Alexander	3	3	2	1
Bond	1	1	1	1
Boone	2	3	2	2
Brown	0	0	0	0
Bureau	1	1	1	0
Calhoun	0	0	0	0
Carroll	1	1	1	0
Cass	0	2	0	0
Champaign	3	18	3	11
Christian	0	5	0	1
Clark	1	1	1	0
Clay	0	1	0	1
Clinton	0	0	0	0
Coles	6	9	5	5
Cook	51	331	51	186
Crawford	1	1	1	1
Cumberland	0	0	0	0
De Witt	0	2	0	0
DeKalb	5	7	5	3
Douglas	1	1	1	1
DuPage	0	12	0	2
Edgar	2	2	2	2
Edwards	1	1	0	0



Low income and low access tract measured at **x** mile for urban areas **and** **y** miles for rural areas

County	1 and 10	Half and 10	1 and 20	Vehicle
Effingham	2	3	1	0
Fayette	5	5	2	1
Ford	1	2	1	0
Franklin	3	6	2	3
Fulton	2	4	0	1
Gallatin	1	1	0	0
Greene	0	1	0	0
Grundy	1	1	1	0
Hamilton	0	1	0	0
Hancock	3	3	1	0
Hardin	0	0	0	0
Henderson	0	0	0	0
Henry	2	3	2	1
Iroquois	3	3	1	1
Jackson	7	9	5	8
Jasper	1	1	1	1
Jefferson	4	5	2	2
Jersey	0	0	0	1
Jo Daviess	1	1	0	0
Johnson	0	0	0	0
Kane	5	30	5	4
Kankakee	5	10	5	7
Kendall	1	1	1	0
Knox	4	7	4	2
Lake	8	26	8	7
La Salle	5	7	5	4
Lawrence	1	2	1	0
Lee	1	1	1	1
Livingston	2	2	2	1
Logan	0	1	0	1
Macon	4	17	4	10
Macoupin	1	4	0	1
Madison	16	25	16	18
Marion	5	6	4	3
Marshall	0	0	0	0
Mason	2	2	1	0
Massac	1	2	1	1
McDonough	5	6	4	2
McHenry	2	4	2	1
McLean	8	16	7	10
Menard	0	0	0	0
Mercer	1	1	0	0
Monroe	0	0	0	0
Montgomery	4	4	3	3

**Low income and low access tract measured at x mile for urban areas and y miles for rural areas**

County	1 and 10	Half and 10	1 and 20	Vehicle
Morgan	5	5	4	2
Moultrie	0	0	0	0
Ogle	2	2	2	0
Peoria	16	25	16	18
Perry	2	2	2	3
Piatt	0	0	0	0
Pike	4	4	1	0
Pope	0	0	0	0
Pulaski	2	2	0	2
Putnam	0	0	0	0
Randolph	1	1	1	1
Richland	0	2	0	0
Rock Island	10	21	10	8
Saline	3	5	3	2
Sangamon	5	24	5	12
Schuyler	1	2	0	0
Scott	0	0	0	0
Shelby	1	2	0	0
St. Clair	20	27	20	19
Stark	0	0	0	0
Stephenson	0	4	0	2
Tazewell	3	7	3	4
Union	1	2	1	1
Vermilion	6	11	6	9
Wabash	1	2	1	0
Warren	1	2	1	0
Washington	0	0	0	0
Wayne	2	4	0	0
White	0	1	0	1
Whiteside	4	5	4	1
Will	16	35	16	9
Williamson	5	5	5	4
Winnebago	11	37	11	12
Woodford	0	0	0	0

**Data source:** U. S. Department of Agriculture, Food Access Research Atlas, 2019.

## Adult Chronic Disease Prevalence

Chronic Condition	Estimated Population	Estimated Percentage	95% Confidence Interval	Number of Respondents
Current asthma status <sup>1</sup>	860,395	8.7%	7.4%-10.2%	278
Told have diabetes	1,075,676	10.8%	9.6%-12.2%	382
Told have arthritis	2,168,165	22.0%	20.2%-23.9%	827
Told had COPD	547,915	5.5%	4.6%-6.6%	211
Told had skin cancer	521,095	5.2%	4.4%-6.2%	222
Told had any other types of cancer	785,981	7.9%	6.8%-9.2%	282
Told had kidney disease	241,469	2.4%	1.9%-3.1%	100
Told had a depressive disorder	1,679,952	16.9%	15.3%-18.8%	533
<b>Chronic health<sup>2</sup></b>				
No chronic disease	4,903,798	49.9%	47.7%-52.2%	1,458
1 chronic disease	2,646,912	27.0%	25.0%-29.0%	882
2+ chronic diseases	2,266,854	23.1%	21.2%-25.1%	833

Data Source: 2021 Illinois Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

1. Calculated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Prevalence for no asthma and former asthma is not displayed.
2. Calculated by IDPH. Chronic health conditions were calculated from heart disease (heart attack/stroke/angina), current asthma, any cancer, COPD, arthritis, depression, kidney disease questions.

NOTE: The COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020 so be aware when comparing or trending years.