Grocery Gap Project

Race, Hunger and Food Access

Jamillah Jordan
Emerson National Hunger Fellow
February 2007

Executive Summary

The Grocery Gap Project, a pilot research study, sought to better understand the relationship between race, poverty and food access in King County, Seattle. The study identified the availability and costs of healthy foods in Seattle's Rainier Valley and Queen Anne neighborhoods. Food access was measured using the USDA's Thrifty Food Plan.

Key Findings

- A family of four who does not receive maximum food assistance benefits will have difficulty purchasing the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) in Seattle (most individuals do not receive maximum benefits).
- The inability to purchase a basic market basket, such as the TFP market basket, causes many households to compensate by buying lower-quality and inexpensive foods to feed their families.
- Items in the TFP were less available across the three levels of stores in Rainier Valley than Queen Anne.
- A greater variety of healthful foods is available at affordable prices in independent groceries in Rainier Valley.

Why is this relevant?

The high costs of fresh produce, whole grains, and low sodium foods significantly reduces the ability of low-income families to eat nutritiously; this inability to purchase nutritious foods increases risk of poor health conditions (hypertension, diabetes, etc).

Key Recommendations

1. **Conduct targeted research efforts among food stamp recipients to determine the sufficiency, or lack thereof, of current benefit levels.** It is necessary to develop accurate, evidence-based descriptions of households struggling to achieve a healthy diet within the current benefit allotment structure. This research should realistically reflect the cost of nutritious food and other basic needs in various regions across the country.

2. **Develop neighborhood food policy councils to provide localized support, education and advocacy for healthier eating.** Neighborhood Food Policy Councils can provide systematic local advocacy, while building awareness of the effects of the local food system on the health of the community. These councils will also help build demand for more fresh produce, lean meats, and whole grains in local stores.

3. **Expand Grocery Gap Project study.** This study should be replicated in other Seattle neighborhoods to create a more comprehensive understanding of the cost of the TFP in Seattle. Simultaneously, public agencies and local government should collect data on the national costs of the TFP in an effort to determine the varying regional costs.

Table of Contents

Introduction and Background

Seattle is an area renowned for its progressive environmental policies, striving to mirror the principles and actions of a healthy, sustainable city. Regions across the country have commended the "Emerald City" for taking a prominent leadership role on issues of the physical environment, such as climate change, recycling, and green design.

However, with so much attention paid to the levels of air pollution and rates of energy conservation, it seems as if a critical element of the environment is missing from the discussion— the local food system. The chain of events that moves our food from the farm to the grocer's shelf is a vital, albeit complicated, process that impacts the health and well being of so many individuals. In light of the numerous food-related issues affecting the city, including the origin of our food, the high costs of eating healthy, and the growing rates of hunger and diabetes, it is essential that we analyze and assess the efficiency of our food system.

In cities across the country, an awakening is taking place, in which more and more people are beginning to question the nature of our national food system, its inherent inequalities, and the opportunities for improvement. Amongst other reasons, this awakening is spurred by the rising rates of obesity and cancer within low-income communities and communities of color. The nexus of food, health, and the environment is so intimately related that it requires an interdisciplinary analysis and multi-dimensional solutions. This umbrella of issues is best captured within the concept of community food security, or the notion that all people have an inalienable right to access a nutritious, affordable, and a culturally appropriate diet at all times.

Within this framework, the links between food access, poverty and nutritional well-being are examined simultaneously, often producing compelling indictments of our food industry. Many communities are now shining light on the inequities of our food system by conducting community food assessments. These assessments are emerging as useful tools because they represent "a powerful way to tell the story of what's happening with food in a community…[using] a participatory and collaborative process that examines a broad range of food-related issues and assets in order to improve the community's food system". [1]

Accordingly, the **Grocery Gap Project: Race, Hunger and Food Access** was created to tell the story of food access in two Seattle neighborhoods. More specifically, the Grocery Gap Project sought to assess the availability and costs of healthy foods in two Seattle communities of distinctly different ethnic and socio-economic levels, using the USDA's Thrifty Food Plan. This report includes the methodology of the study, our findings and recommendations. It is our sincere hope and long-term goal that the findings generated from this study serve as a call to action for residents, local organizations and policy makers to eliminate the barriers of access to nutritious, affordable foods for all King County, Seattle residents.

Why Access Matters?

Do all communities have equal access to nutritious, affordable foods? Many studies have revealed that egregious disparities of both spatial and economic access to healthy foods exist in low-income communities. In a recent report titled *Healthy Food, Healthy Communities,* the authors contend that:

> **"One necessity of good health is being able to easily buy and eat fresh fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods. All too often, however, healthy food options are limited – or completely unavailable – in low-income communities. This lack of local access to healthy, affordable food affects what people eat and ultimately threatens both individual and community vitality – residents risk obesity and other poor health conditions, and communities suffer."**[2]

Over the last fifty years, large-scale supermarkets have abandoned low-income communities for their "more affluent counterparts, leaving entire communities little or no access to affordable, quality food".[3] This phenomenon, known as "supermarket redlining", disproportionately affects communities of color, and consequently contributes to the decline of urban health. As a result, many low-income households are often forced to travel long distances to supermarkets; or, they must purchase their groceries at inflated prices from local, convenience stores that offer high-calorie, processed foods and lack fresh fruits and vegetables. Additionally, corporate mergers and the consolidation of grocery stores exacerbate this dynamic by creating less competition for the consumer dollar and essentially controlling market prices.

However, the presence or absence of grocery stores is not the only measure of inadequate access to healthy foods. The costs of nutritious food can also serve as a major barrier to achieving a healthy diet. In turn, there is no shortage of evidence that demonstrates the alarming paradox that low-income communities pay higher prices in comparison to suburban shoppers when it comes to food shopping. Lean meats, nutritious fruits and vegetables, and whole grains are high-cost purchases that are often out of range for low-income shoppers. Within this understanding, "the lack of food security extends far beyond the inequitable distribution of supermarkets…[and] it is evident in the dangerously high proportion of household budgets dedicated to purchasing the most basic food basket".[4] Thus, the multi-dimensional barriers to access in low-wealth neighborhoods of color indicate that residents of these communities experience a severe disadvantage when attempting to achieve a healthy diet.

Access Denied

- A multi-state study found that wealthy neighborhoods had over three times as many supermarkets as low-wealth neighborhoods.
- Access also varies by race, with predominantly white neighborhoods having four times more supermarkets than predominantly black neighborhoods.
- Prices at the corner stores that dot inner city neighborhoods, for example, can be as much as 49 percent higher than those of supermarkets, for a limited selection of canned and processed foods and very little, if any, fresh meat and produce.[5]

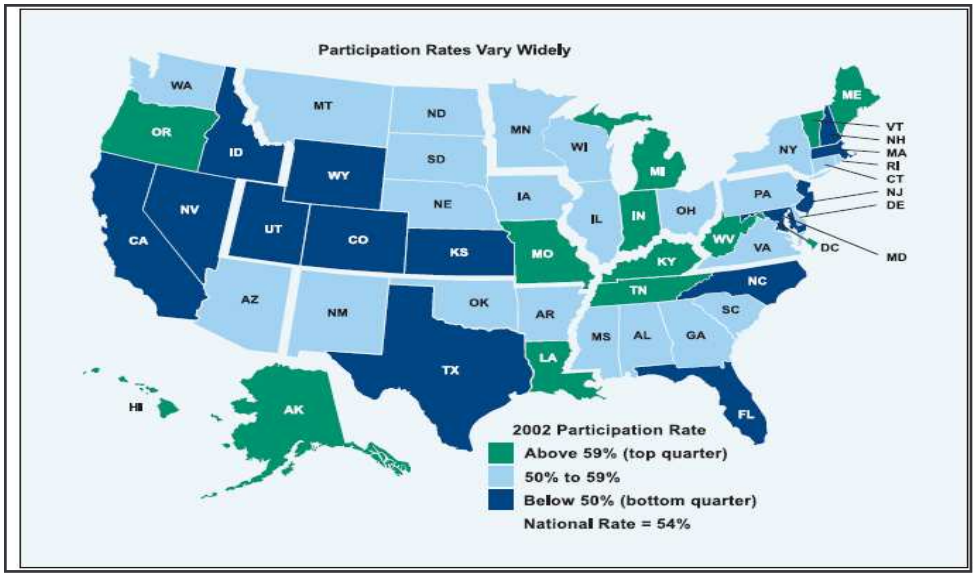
Food Stamps & the Thrifty Food Plan

To ameliorate the difficulties in purchasing nutritious foods for low-income populations, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) developed the Food Stamp Program in the early 1960's. This program is considered the nation's first line of defense against hunger, serving as "the cornerstone of the Federal food assistance programs…[by providing] crucial support to needy households".[6] Currently, there are over 26 million people receiving food stamps across the country; and, in Washington State, there are over 535,768 individuals[7] participating in the food stamp program (*See figure 1.1*).[8]

Food stamp benefits are based on the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP), one of four USDA-designed food plans. This plan demonstrates how to buy a specific set of relatively nutritious foods on a limited budget. The TFP has tremendous influence on policy decisions because it "serves as a national standard for a nutritious diet at a minimal cost and is used as the basis for food stamp allotments".[9] The last major revision of the TFP was completed in 1999 by the USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion in an effort to represent updated dietary recommendations and nutritional guidelines. Every month, the costs of the TFP are updated to reflect inflation rates and national averages, using price data from the Consumer Price Index.

Since the TFP serves as a standard for assessing costs and availability of specific food items across food stores, this low-cost plan is often used in community food assessments. Using the TFP as an assessment tool creates uniformity of assessments completed across the country and generates data that has direct implications for national food policies. For these reasons, the Grocery Gap Project based the study on week two of the TFP for a family of four (man and woman age 20 to 50; one child age 6 to 8, and one child age 9 to 11). However, the TFP is not without criticism and this report highlights the limitations of the food plan in the "*Discussion*" section.

Figure 1.1: State Food Stamp Participation Rates



Grocery Gap Project Design and Methodology

The primary goals of the Grocery Gap Project are 1) to determine whether two Seattle neighborhoods could afford the TFP at the costs set by the USDA, 2) to observe any disparities in costs and availability between the two neighborhoods, and 3) to create a snapshot of the local food environment in both neighborhoods.

Project Objectives

•Assess food availability (presence or absence) and affordability (costs) within two communities of distinctly different ethnic/ racial and socio-economic levels, using USDA's Thrifty Food Plan.

•Determine whether the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) market basket can be purchased from neighborhood food retailers at or below the TFP cost threshold set by USDA.

Project Methods

Two Seattle neighborhoods were identified for the study: Rainier Valley and Queen Anne. The major criteria for selecting the neighborhoods included the percentage of minorities, the number of households below the federal poverty level, and the number of major grocery store chains.

Utilizing the principles of Community Based Participatory Research, the author of the study conducted two focus groups/ community discussions in each neighborhood. The results from the community discussions yielded insightful information related to the predominant factors that influence the food shopping patterns of community members. In addition, the focus groups were successful in engaging community members to assist in developing priorities and recommendations for the project. Also, key leaders of local organizations and other community stakeholders were interviewed to obtain valuable details about the history and present state of affairs of both communities.

The selection of stores surveyed was divided into three categories: Independent supermarkets, Independent Groceries (including ethnic markets, discount stores, and specialty stores), and Convenience stores. An implicit goal of the store selection involved trying to achieve a representative sample of the breadth of stores available in each neighborhood.

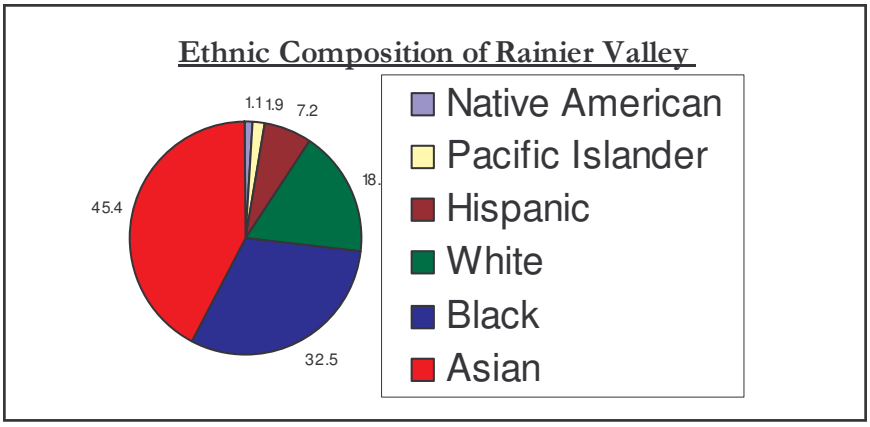
The research team identified stores along major corridors and the focus group members informed the researchers of smaller, specialty stores popular among residents. Ten stores were surveyed in Rainier Valley and nine stores in Queen Anne. The stores in both neighborhoods were surveyed in December 2006. The data collection team included volunteers from both communities, including residents and local youth.

The author of the study developed a food store survey using the second of the TFP weekly shopping lists. The survey included 87 food items, which were divided into eight food categories. The categories included: 1) breads, cereals, and other grain products, 2) milk and cheese, 3) meat and meat alternatives, 4) fruits, 5) vegetables, 6) fats and oils, 7) sugars and sweets, and 8) condiments and spices.

Neighborhood Profile: Rainier Valley

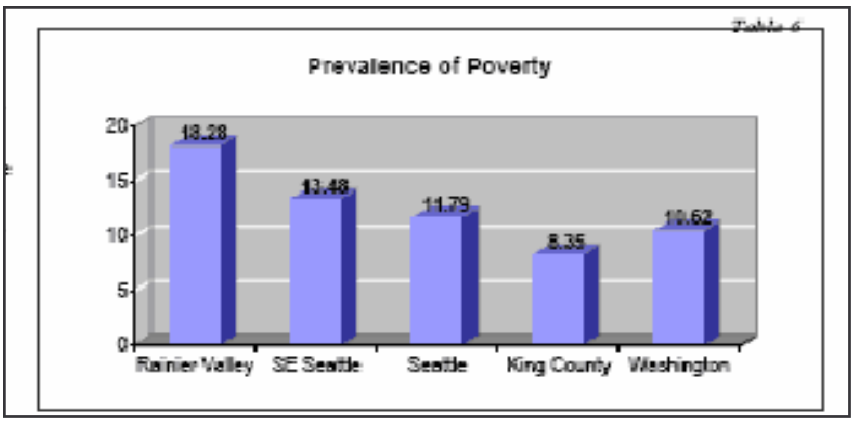
Rainier Valley is a multi-ethnic, urban neighborhood located in Southeast Seattle, adjacent to Seward Park and south of Beacon Hill. The community is well known for its cultural diversity, as 83 percent of the residents are people of color.[10] Over sixty languages are spoken in the Rainier Valley and the area is also "the home of a large proportion of Seattle's immigrant population as 40 percent of the population are foreign born".[11] Asians account for 45 percent of the population, followed by Blacks/ African Americans comprising 32.6 percent, and Hispanics are 7.23 percent of the Rainier Valley population[12] (*see Figure 1.2).*[13]

Figure 1.2:



Despite the cultural richness of this community, it is also among the poorest regions in Seattle. "Seattle's economic boom mostly bypassed Rainier [Valley]" and the area is only recently receiving attention from the local government.[14] Recent reports indicate that Rainier Valley's poverty rate is 55% above the citywide poverty rate and 18.3 percent of Rainier Valley residents lived in poverty in 1999.[15] (*see Figure 1.3)*[16]

Figure 1.3: Prevalence of Poverty in Rainier Valley



Gentrification and Development

To combat the entrenched poverty that has plagued the community for years, Mayor Greg Nickels and local city officials recently developed the Southeast Seattle "action agenda", earmarking over $95 million towards community revitalization. However, many residents and local business owners are concerned that the "community renewal" efforts will come at the expense of displacement of the existing residents. On the other hand, the development driven agenda and growth of private investment in the neighborhood has potential to improve the food retailers in the area, and subsequently the access to nutritious foods.

Photo: Rainier Valley Mural illustrating the ethnic diversity of the community

Characteristics of the Neighborhood Food Environment

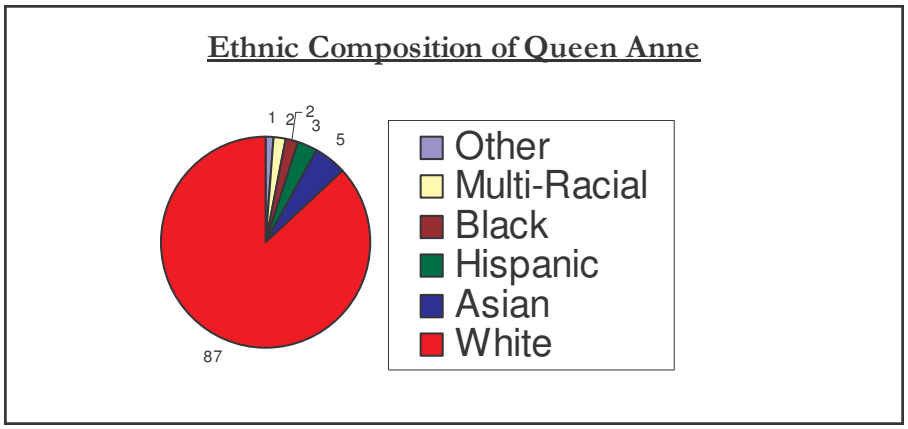
Contrary to the widespread pattern of poor communities lacking physical access to supermarkets, academic studies suggest that a "fairly even distribution of grocery stores" exist in Seattle.[17] The Rainier Valley also has a wide variety of ethnic markets and discount food stores, catering to the diverse population. This community is also host to a large number of convenience stores and fast food restaurants, offering limited fresh food options. In addition, the Rainier Valley has a food bank that serves many community residents as well.

"Where there is poverty, there is hunger". Photo: Long lines outside of the Rainier Valley food bank.

Neighborhood Profile: Queen Anne

Queen Anne is an affluent residential and business district located near the Lake Washington Ship Canal, south of the Seattle Center. "Queen Anne is one of the city's most popular (and expensive) neighborhoods",[18] as residents enjoy the close proximity to downtown and the sweeping views of Lake Washington. With a population of about 26,595, the median household income is $60,047. Approximately 87% of the population is white, and only 13% are people of color.[19]

Figure 1.4:



Characteristics of the Neighborhood Food Environment

Queen Anne is home to a relatively large number of grocery stores in relation to the size of the community. In light of the wealth of the neighborhood, many grocery stores have saturated the area in an effort to capture the consumer dollar. The shopping district caters to an upscale clientele and includes high-end specialty food stores and posh eateries. In Queen Anne, "distinctive groceries are introduced to discriminating shoppers" and the local food stores offer many imported, "designer" foods.[20]

"After all, grocery stores don't just feed a neighborhood. They also feed a neighborhood's self-esteem."

Photo of Metropolitan market: a specialty, gourmet grocery store in Queen Anne

Project Findings:

Can a low-income family afford the TFP market basket in Seattle?

The national cost of the weekly TFP was set at $121.30 and the monthly cost at $525.60 for November 2006 [21].[22] The aforementioned TFP prices represent the standard for determining the "maximum monthly Food Stamp allotment for this type of family across the nation at that time".[23]

Study findings revealed that the weekly TFP market basket cost $123.27 per week in Queen Anne and $121.59 in Rainier Valley. These costs are similar to the national cost of the TFP. However, the costs of the market basket pose significant challenges for a low-income family who does not receive maximum food stamp benefits. Currently, the average monthly food stamp benefit per household in Washington State is only $183.38– one of the lowest of all the 50 states. And the current maximum benefit allotment is $518 per month.[24] In turn, the research findings indicate that low income families in Seattle "relying on food stamps benefits are likely to have difficulty purchasing the basic TFP market basket, even if they receive the maximum benefit allotment"[25] (*See figure 1.5).*

Figure 1.5: A Tale of Two Neighborhoods

	Rainier Valley	Queen Anne	National
Weekly Cost of TFP	121.59	123.27	121.30
Availability	52 out of 87	62 out of 87	
Average 2007 *monthly* benefit in WA			183.38

The maximum benefit allotment compared with the cost of the Seattle TFP takes on extra significance in light of the fact that only a few families receive maximum benefits. Only households with no countable income receive the maximum allotment.[26] The inability to purchase this basic market basket, causes many families to compensate by buying lower-quality, processed, and cheap foods to feed their families. Thus, a low-income family's ability to eat nutritiously is significantly compromised by their low food budget and by the low levels of food stamp benefits.

Project Findings:

Availability Breakdown Across the Three Store Types

In terms of availability (presence or absence), on average 52 out of 87 items were available in the Rainier Valley; and 62 out of 87 items were available in Queen Anne. (*See figure 1.5*). These results indicate that the items in the TFP were less available across the three levels of stores in the low-income community compared to the more affluent neighborhood. Consequently, these findings show that a Rainier Valley household has less access to healthy food items. And as a result, these households may be less likely to achieve a healthy diet based on their local food environment.

Photo: Youth of Rainier Valley assisting with data collection.

The study revealed that food availability is greatest in the chain supermarkets. In both neighborhoods, the costs of the market basket were comparable and showed little variation in supermarkets. In Rainier Valley, a greater variety of healthful foods were available for relatively low prices at independent groceries (e.g.: ethnic markets: Viet-Wah and Vina). In Queen Anne, due to the higher end, specialty stores, the independent stores in this neighborhood had higher market basket costs. As to be expected, items were least available and most expensive in the convenience stores in both neighborhoods.

Photo: Bobbie Cook checks out the frozen food aisle during her shopping trip at the Safeway in Rainier Valley. Cook, who lives on a fixed income, is particularly interested in the issue of food availability and affordability. She shops at three different stores in Rainier Beach and is selective about what she buys.[33]

Discussion:

Limitations of the Thrifty Food Plan:
How effective is the TFP in determining the allotments for food stamp benefits?

The study results revealed that it would be extremely difficult for a family of four, receiving limited food stamp benefits, to afford the TFP in Seattle. Similar studies have exposed the numerous limitations of the TFP and the subsequent effects on low-income people. In theory, the TFP is a standardized food plan that demonstrates how to buy a nutritionally adequate set of food items at a modest cost. However, there is extensive variation in the costs of the TFP in regions across the country.

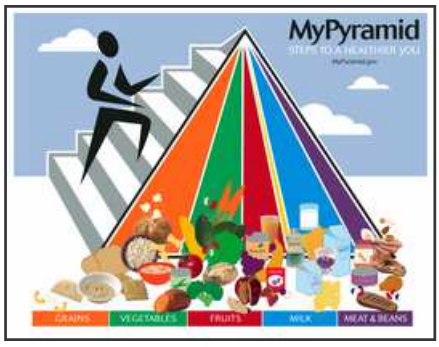
For example, a similar study, "*The Real Costs of a Healthy Meal*", identified the costs of the TFP in three low-income Boston neighborhoods and found that "families in Boston relying on the maximum food stamp benefit for their food budget would fall short by $26.98 each month when trying to purchase the Thrifty Food Plan".[27] Therefore, the TFP's failure to take into account the regional price differences of food is a major limitation on its effectiveness. In food deserts, rural communities, and high-poverty areas, it is necessary to conduct more research to assess the situational variation of food prices in those communities.

Furthermore, many researchers believe that the TFP is based on unrealistic criteria. Currently, the TFP requires an average of 3.5 hours per day of food preparation.[28] This is an extraordinary amount of time for a single mother, an elderly person, or a working family. In addition, the food quantities and costs specified by the TFP are "24% lower than the average low-income family's food expenditures, and assume a 30% contribution of the household budget towards food".[29] From this perspective the TFP perpetuates malnutrition and consumes a huge portion of a family's budget, despite its perception of being nutritionally adequate and inexpensive.

Based on the numerous limitations of the TFP, it becomes obvious that the nation's first line of defense against hunger, the widely touted Food Stamp Program, is at best a shortsighted, band-aid solution to a long-term problem. Moreover, with the meager benefit allotments, complicated application procedures, and low participation among needy households, the Food Stamps Program's ineffectiveness leaves many communities vulnerable to hunger and undernutrition.

Poor are priced out of healthful eating

"In a food-conscious city such as Seattle, where consumers are willing to pay a premium for all things wild, organic and locally grown, chances are pretty good that you can find and buy healthful food wherever you live. But can you afford to buy and eat healthfully if you're poor?" [30]



Our community discussions elucidated the real life concerns of residents seeking access to a healthy diet. To gain a better understanding of food access issues, the researcher gathered residents, community workers, and concerned stakeholders in both neighborhoods to discuss their respective food environments. The feedback from the focus groups added valuable insight and shed light on the food-related issues faced by community members.

When asked by the researcher, "*When you go to the grocery store, are you most concerned with price, nutrition, or your taste buds*?", Rainier Valley residents overwhelmingly stated that price was the most important factor. "I am on fixed income, so I am sale-focused", said an elderly Rainier Valley resident. Other residents echoed the same sentiment, "[a] lot of low-income, disabled and seniors end up having Class B food" says Becky Mustoe, a Rainier Valley native. "I believe organic and very fresh or frozen food would be optimum for me, but I have to make compromises because of the money."[31] These comments are particularly poignant due to the fact that Rainier Valley residents could barely afford to purchase the TFP market basket.

The ability to purchase nutritionally adequate food is limited by price. For example, the Grocery Gap study demonstrated that there is a drastic difference between the price of canned fruits and vegetables versus fresh fruits and vegetables (*see Figure 1.6*). "What are people supposed to do when they want to eat healthy, but they can't afford it", said Eula Clark, a resident of the Brighton Apartments Senior Center in Rainier Valley. This is the central question that must be addressed collectively by elected officials, public agencies, nutritionists, and others.

Figure 1.6: Nutrition vs. Costs

	Cost of Fresh Fruits & Vegetables	Cost of Canned Fruits & Vegetables	Price Difference
Rainier Valley	18.70	7.32	11.38
Queen Anne	19.03	7.04	11.99

In light of the rising rates of obesity and diabetes in low-income communities, the research results have tremendous significance. The findings illustrate the financial barriers that low-income people face in accessing nutritious and affordable foods in their communities. "It's just amazing how nutritious food is becoming a luxury item and increasingly inaccessible to an ever larger number of people."[32] Essentially the United States is developing a two-tier food system: one with expensive, "designer", and organic foods that nourish the body and another tier with cheap, processed, energy-dense foods rich in starch, sugar and fat that rob us of our health. Consequently, the health of both the urban and rural poor is deteriorating with dramatic intensity.

The Hunger - Obesity Paradox

At the heart of any future policy has to be two issues which at first glance seem contradictory: hunger and obesity. .... These problems are in fact two sides of the same coin. For millions of families, when they don't have enough money to buy food, they go hungry. But, when they have only a little money, they tend to buy low-cost foods, which may or may not have all the nutrients they need. So our challenge isn't only to ensure that people have enough food to eat, but that they have the resources and access to enough of the right foods.

-- Dan Glickman[34],
Secretary of Agriculture 2000

We talk so much about nutrition these days, yet we rarely discuss the high costs associated with eating healthfully. In Seattle, it is time for public agencies and local government to step up and invest in the health and future well being of all King County, Seattle residents by eliminating barriers of access to healthy foods.

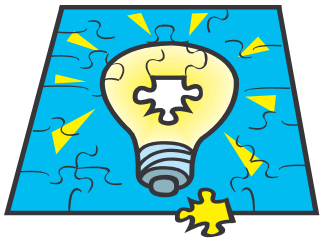
Voices from the Community:

- "I want to be able to afford stuff other than ground beef...and the fatty ground beef at that."

"That (the TFP) can't feed a family of four...not in my house, that wouldn't last a few days."

- "I spend more on food every month than everything else."
- "Do I buy this cantaloupe or do I buy my medicine?"
- "What are people supposed to do when they want to eat healthy, but they can't afford it."

Project Recommendations:
Closing the Grocery Gap



The Grocery Gap Project identified the difficulties that low-income households and food stamp recipients encounter when trying to purchase the Thrifty Food Plan in Seattle. However, as low-income families continue to face economic barriers to eating healthfully, there are a number of specific steps public agencies can take to make fresh produce and other healthy foods more available and affordable in low-income communities. The author proposes the following recommendations:

1. Conduct targeted research efforts among food stamp recipients to determine the sufficiency, or lack thereof, of current benefit levels. It is necessary to develop accurate, evidence-based descriptions of households struggling to achieve a healthy diet within the current benefit allotment structure. This research should realistically reflect the cost of nutritious food and other basic needs in various regions across the country.

2. Develop neighborhood food policy councils to provide localized support, education and advocacy for healthier eating. These councils comprised of residents, key stakeholders, and community based organizations, will develop innovative, community-based solutions to food access barriers. For the last year, King County's Acting Food Policy Council has provided great advocacy for the cause of building a sustainable local food system. We should build on this model to develop grassroots Neighborhood Councils that have direct connections with local schools, community groups, P-patches, and other organizations to promote healthy eating.

Neighborhood Food Policy Councils can provide systematic local advocacy, while building awareness of the effects of the local food system on the health of the community. These councils will also help build demand for more fresh produce, lean meats, and whole grains in local stores.

3. Expand the Grocery Gap Project study. This study should be replicated in other Seattle neighborhoods to create a more comprehensive understanding of the cost of the TFP in Seattle. Simultaneously, public agencies and local government should collect data on the national costs of the TFP in an effort to determine the varying regional costs. Following the national analysis, the TFP threshold cost and the corresponding food stamp allotment should be updated to accommodate cost of living increases in various regions.

Project Recommendations:

4. Increase support mechanisms to build and expand healthy, independent local grocery stores. In Seattle, a greater variety of high-quality, healthful foods were available at inexpensive prices in the independent grocery stores (e.g.: Viet-Wah, Vina, and Trader Joe's). Communities ranging from Harlem, New York to Fresno, California have developed a variety of ways to support small, local grocers. Independent groceries fill a niche in the community by offering competitive prices due to lower overhead costs.

Project Limitations:

The Grocery Gap Project is a community level assessment that measured food access in two neighborhoods. Due to limited capacity and resources, the research team focused their efforts on nineteen stores with the goal of examining a representative sample of the food retailers in both neighborhoods. In spite of the scope of the project, the results cannot be generalized to all cities or all regions. To provide a more comprehensive picture of the grocery gap in the Seattle, future research should be conducted, replicating this study's methodology and design in other neighborhoods.

In addition, further study is needed to examine what food stamp participants are purchasing with their benefits. Conducting more focus groups would be a valuable method for collecting more extensive qualitative data on the factors that influence food-shopping choices.

Conclusion:

The struggle for food security in all communities necessitates an analysis of the systemic causes of hunger and poverty. The inability of low-income families to access the basic necessities of life, such as food, is a grave injustice and an embarrassment for the richest nation of the world. Today, the structure of our food system is representative of one of the many egregious disparities that persist in this country. However, alternatives to the current corporate, profit-driven food system exist. Many communities are now empowering themselves by defining and analyzing the multi-dimensional problems of food access. At the same time, these communities are marshalling their resources and developing community-driven solutions to rectify the unequal access to nutritious, affordable foods. And instead of the dismal descriptions of escalating rates of diabetes and other associated morbidities, we are gradually seeing the compelling images of triumphant communities that have reclaimed their food systems and reclaimed the future of food for their children.

Acknowledgements

This report was written and prepared by Jamillah Jordan, an Emerson National Hunger Fellow with the Congressional Hunger Center.

The Grocery Gap Project: Race Hunger and Food Access was funded and supported by both the Congressional Hunger Center and Solid Ground (formerly the Fremont Public Association).

The author would like to acknowledge and thank the following organizations and individuals for providing information, analysis, guidance and general support:

Anti-Racism Initiative of Solid Ground
Community Members of Rainier Valley
Community Members of Queen Anne
Congressional Hunger Center
Solid Ground
Branden Born
Paul Haas
Colin Rehm
Elena Semeraro
Irene Woo

For questions or comments about this report, please contact:

Solid Ground
1501 N. 45th St., Seattle, WA 98103
206.694.6802
publications@solid-ground.org
http://www.solid-ground.org/ac/articles

Jamillah Jordan, Emerson National Hunger Fellow
Congressional Hunger Center
jjordan@hungercenter.org

Endnotes:

1. Community Food Security Coalition. "Community Food Assessment Program". http://www.foodsecurity.org/cfa_home.html.

2. Flournoy, R. and Treuhaft, S. Healthy Food, Healthy Communities: Improving Access and Opportunities Through Food Retailing. PolicyLink and The California Endowment, 2005.

3. Kilman, C. "Food Redlining: A Hidden Cause of Hunger". Tolerance.org. February 2005. http://www.tolerance.org/news/article_print.jsp?id=1168

4. Ashman, L. et al. Seeds Of Change: Strategies for Food security for the Inner City. UCLA, 1993.

5. Flournoy, R. et al., 12

6. United States Department of Agriculture. Food Stamp Program Introduction. http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fsavghh$.htm. Accessed 2-5-07.

7. United States Department of Agriculture. Food Stamp Program Average Monthly Participation. http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fsfypart.htm. Accessed 2-4-07.

8. Aldridge, D. et al. "Making America Stronger: A Profile of the Food Stamp Program". United States Department of Agriculture, September 2005.
9. http://www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/FILES/Other/FSPProfile.pdf

10. Andrews, M, et al. "Using USDA's Thrifty Food Plan to Assess Food Availability and Affordability," Food Review 24 (May-August 2001).

11. Rainier Valley Community Development Fund. "Socio-Economic Profile of Rainier Valley", August 2003. http://www.rvcdf.org/docs/RainierValleyProfile.pdf

12. Rainier Valley Community Development Fund, 3.

13. Rainier Valley Community Development Fund, 3.

14. Rainier Valley Community Development Fund, 3. Graphic changed by the author on 2-4-07.

15. Le, Phoung. "Rainier Beach mom-and-pop stores to be uprooted by Safeway". Seattle Post-Intelligencer, *July 2001.*

16. Rainier Valley Community Development Fund, 3.

17. Rehm, C. "The Physical Food Environment in King County". http://depts.washington.edu/uwecor/docs/c_rehm_Physical%20Food%20Environment.pdf. Ac-

Endnotes:

18. Queen Anne Webtown. "Home to a view seen 'round the world" ". Seattle Post-Intelligencer, *Accessed 1-05-07*.

19. Queen Anne Webtown Census Data. Seattle Post-Intelligencer, *Accessed 1-05-07*. http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/webtowns/census.asp?WTID=11

20. Eskenazi, S. "Grocery change not sitting well". *Seattle Times. December 2005*.

21. United States Department of Agriculture. Official USDA Food Plans: Cost of Food at Home at Four Levels, U.S. Average, November 2006. http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/FoodPlans/CostofFoodNov06.pdf. Accessed 12-09-06.

22. At the time of the research, the TFP cost for December 2006 had not been updated. At present, the December 2006 price has been uploaded and there is a .20 cents increase between November and December.

23. Neault N, Cook JT, Morris V, Frank DA. The Real Cost of a Healthy Diet: Healthful Foods Are Out of Reach for Low-Income Families in Boston, Massachusetts. Report published August 2005 by the Boston Medical Center Department of Pediatrics. Available at: http://dcc2.bumc.bu.edu/csnappublic/HealthyDiet_Aug2005.pdf

24. United States Department of Agriculture. Maximum Benefit Allotments. http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/faqs.htm. Accessed 1-24-07.

25. Neault N et al., 4.

26. United States Department of Agriculture. "Food Stamp Program Frequently Asked Questions". http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/faqs.htm. Accessed 2-2-07.

27. Neault N et al., 4.

28. Ashman, L. et al., 19.

29. Ashman, L. et al., 19.

30. Le, Phoung. "The Poor are priced out of healthy eating". Seattle Post-Intelligencer, February 2007.

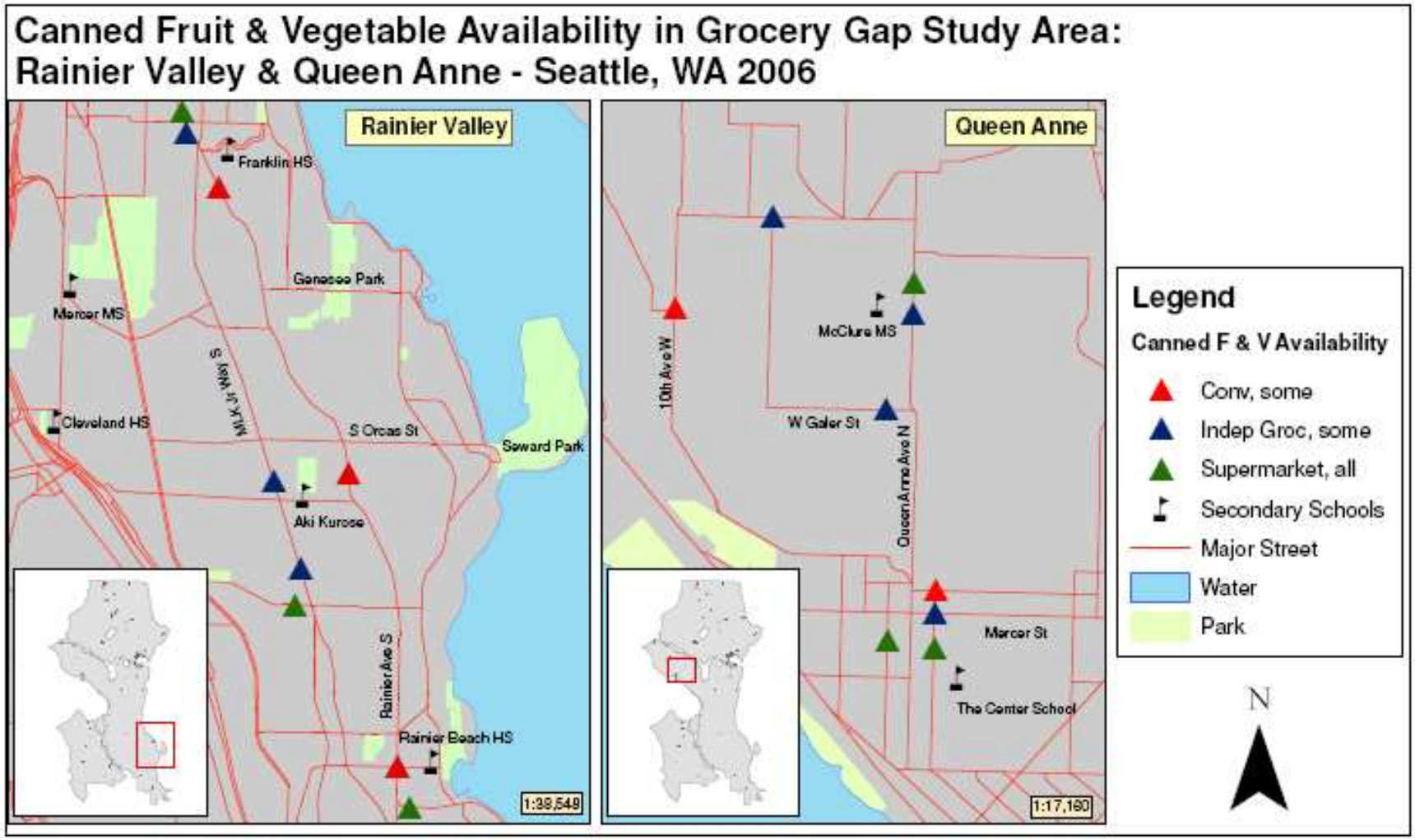
31. Le, Phoung. "The Poor are priced out of healthy eating".

32. Le, Phoung. "The Poor are priced out of healthy eating".

33. Le, Phoung. "The Poor are priced out of healthy eating".

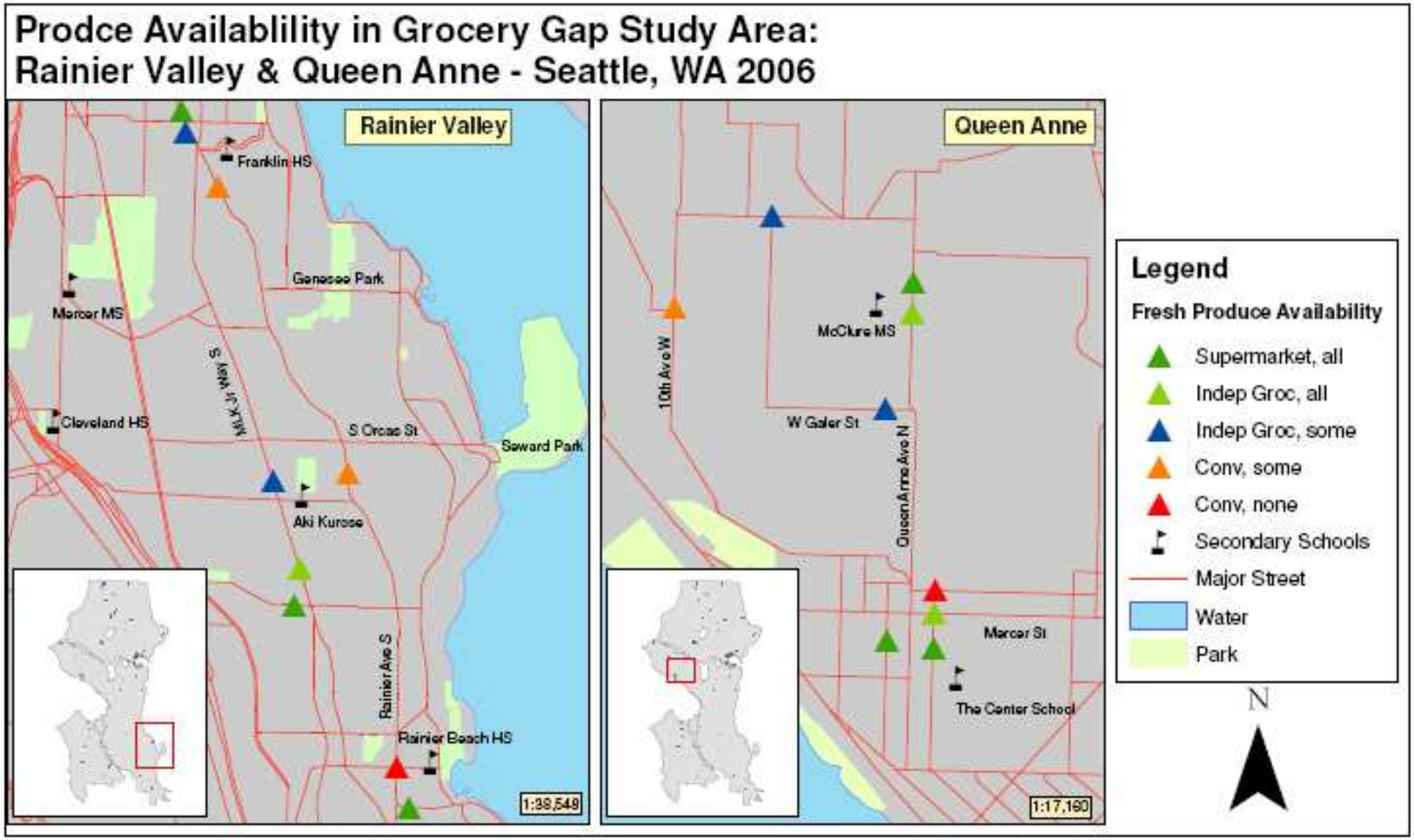
34. "Building a Sustainable Community Food System in Seattle and King County: Concept Paper for Developing a Local Food Policy Council." http://king.wsu.edu/foodandfarms/documents/SeattleKingFPCconcept.pdf

Appendix:



Maps Created by Colin Rehm: crehm@u.washington.edu

Appendix: Produce Availability Map



Maps Created by Colin Rehm: crehm@u.washington.edu

Appendix: Week Two Food List of TFP

FOOD LIST

Week II: Food for a Family of Four[1]

Fruits and Vegetables	
Fresh[2]:	
Apples	(5 small) 1 lb 4 oz
Bananas	(11 medium) 2 lb 12 oz
Grapes	1 lb 8 oz
Melon	1 lb
Oranges	(22 small) 4 lb 12 oz
Carrots	1 lb
Celery	5 oz
Green pepper	4 oz
Lettuce, leaf	9 oz
Onions	1 lb 4 oz
Potatoes	10 lb 8 oz
Tomatoes	6 oz
Canned:	
Oranges, mandarin	13 oz
Peaches, canned, light-syrup	1 lb 10 oz
Mushrooms, canned	4 oz
Spaghetti sauce	26 oz
Tomato sauce	8 oz
Frozen:	
Orange juice, concentrate	7 12-oz cans
Broccoli	6 oz
French fries	11 oz
Green beans	1 lb 7 oz
Peas	15 oz
Breads, Cereals, and Other Grain Products	
Bagels, plain, enriched	(4) 8 oz
Bread crumbs	3 oz
Bread, French	4 oz
Bread, white, enriched	2 lb
Bread, whole-wheat	1 lb
Hamburger buns, enriched	8
Rolls, dinner, enriched	4
Ready-to-eat cereal	
Corn flakes	1 oz
Toasted oats	10 oz
Flour, enriched	1 lb 7 oz
Macaroni, enriched	1 lb 5 oz
Noodles, yolk-free, enriched	1 lb 2 oz
Popcorn, microwave, unpopped	3 oz
Rice, enriched	3 lb 2 oz
Spaghetti, enriched	11 oz
Milk and Cheese	
Evaporated milk	4 oz
Milk, 1% lowfat	9 qt
Milk, whole	4 qt
Cheese, cheddar	2 oz
Cheese, cottage	7 oz
Cheese, mozzarella	1 oz
Meat and Meat Alternates	
Beef, ground, lean	3 lb 15 oz
Chicken, fryer	1 lb 13 oz
Chicken, thighs	2 lb 12 oz
Fish (flounder, cod), frozen	2 lb
Tuna fish, chunk-style, water-pack	12 oz
Pork, ground	1 lb 7 oz
Turkey, ground	1 lb
Turkey ham	11 oz
Beans, garbanzo (chickpeas), canned	15 oz
Beans, kidney, canned	15 oz
Beans, vegetarian, canned	1 lb 9 oz
Eggs, large	17
Fats and Oils	
Margarine, stick	15 oz
Shortening	4 oz
Salad dressing, mayonnaise-type	6 fl oz
Vegetable oil	9 fl oz
Sugars and Sweets	
Sugar, brown	1 oz
Sugar, powdered	3 oz
Sugar, granulated	9 oz
Jelly	8 oz
Molasses	1 fl oz
Pancake syrup	2 oz
Chocolate chips, semi-sweet	2 oz
Fruit drink	1 gal
Fudgesicles, ice milk	4
Other Food Items[3]	
Baking powder	
Baking soda	
Black pepper	
Catsup	
Chicken broth, reduced sodium	
Chili powder	
Cinnamon	
Chocolate drink mix, powdered	
Cumin	
Dried onion	
Garlic powder	
Gelatin, unflavored	
Italian herb seasoning	
Lemon juice, bottled	
Oregano	
Paprika	
Salt	
Soy sauce, reduced sodium	
Vanilla	

[1]Provides food for a family of four. Amounts of food shown are for foods **actually used** during the week.
[2]Substitute other fruits or vegetables in season that contain similar nutrients if they are better buys.
[3]Small amounts used in preparing recipes and other food items in the Week 1 menus; purchase as needed.