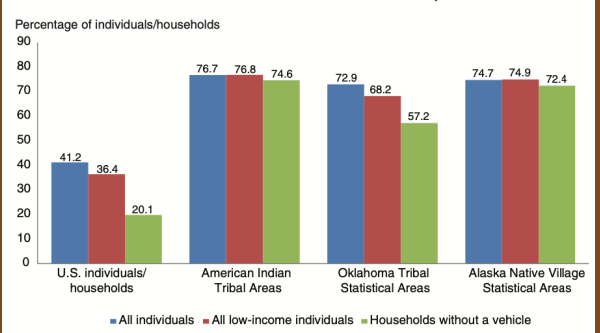


ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY IN INDIAN COUNTRY

FOOD INSECURITY & FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

- **Food Insecurity** is a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life
- **Food Deserts** are low-income areas in which a substantial proportion of the population has low access to healthy and affordable food
- **Food Sovereignty** is the ability of communities to determine the quantity and quality of the food that they consume by controlling how their food is produced and distributed

Share of individuals and households more than 1 mile from a supermarket



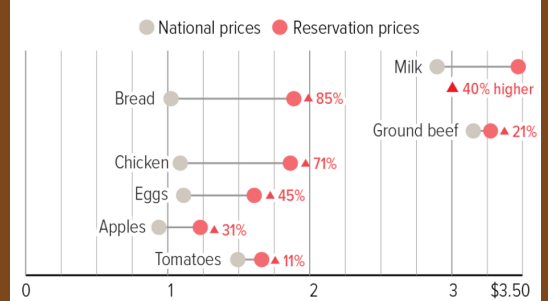
FOOD INSECURITY IN INDIAN COUNTRY

- 1 in 4 Native people experience food insecurity, compared with a national average of 1 in 9
- Tribal areas also see high rates of poverty with almost 1/2 of all individuals living in Indian Country having incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level
- Many tribal reservations are classified as food deserts by the USDA -- including the Navajo Nation, where less than 15 grocery stores serve the entire 27,000 square mile reservation. For reference, that's larger than the state of West Virginia, which has over 2,000 grocery stores.
- Reservation grocery stores often charge higher prices than the national average

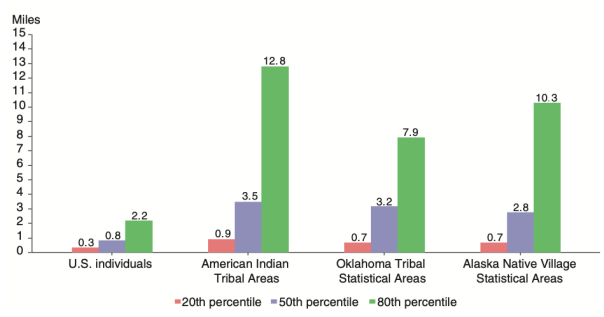


- Only 25.6% of individuals in tribal areas live within walking distance of a supermarket, whereas 58.8% of all Americans live within walking distance of a supermarket
- The median distance to the nearest supermarket is 0.8 miles for all Americans, but 3.3 miles for tribal areas

Reservation Residents Pay Higher Food Prices Than Other U.S. Consumers



Access distance to all super markets by population percentiles: U.S. and tribal area individuals



THE FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM ON INDIAN RESERVATIONS (FDPIR)

The FDPIR attempts to address food insecurity by distributing a monthly commodity package to low-income households in Indian Country. In 2019, the FDPIR had an average of 83,800 participants each month. FDPIR packages are the sole or primary food source for 37.7% of participants. The average travel distance to get an FDPIR package is 16 miles, but 31% of participating households lack access to a vehicle. The packages are often criticized for containing primarily canned and low-nutrient foods while lacking high quality fresh and traditional tribal foods. The USDA spends about \$1.90 in food per day per FDPIR participant, compared to an average of about \$4.00 per day for SNAP participants. Since the FDPIR is meant to be an alternative to SNAP, households can't benefit from both and the low number of grocery stores in tribal areas makes FDPIR the better option for many Indigenous communities.

WAYS TO IMPROVE FOOD ACCESS & PROMOTE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

1) Expanding the FDPIR Self-Determination Project

Since 2021, the USDA has offered grants for Tribes to participate in a project that gives them more control over the FDPIR food procurement process by enabling them to source foods from local Tribal producers. However, Tribes have to apply for the project and so far only 8 Tribal nations have received funding. Expanding the project and making it easier to apply would increase tribal access to locally-grown fresh food, create economic opportunities for Tribal producers, and help Tribes regain control over their food systems

2) Tribal governments enacting food policies that increase access and affordability of healthy foods

The Navajo Nation's Healthy Diné Act of 2014 eliminated sales tax on healthy foods, like fruits and vegetables, while increasing the tax on unhealthy foods, like soda. Tax revenues will be used to fund wellness and food sovereignty projects like community gardens.

3) Improving federal and state laws and policies to support tribal food sovereignty

Revising laws that restrict traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering practices and ensuring cross-government collaboration and co-management of public lands, waters, and ecological restoration projects

4) Increased funding and support for programs that promote food sovereignty and work to address the continuing consequences of colonization and displacement

- The Northern Plains Reservation Aid's Project Grow tills garden sites and provides gardening supplies.
- The Healthy Navajo Stores Initiative works to increase amounts of produce and traditional foods in small convenience stores, which are the most easily accessible source of food for many Navajo Nation citizens.
- Seeds and Sheep provides drought-resistant seeds and Navajo-Churro sheep to families to restore self-sufficient food systems and reclaim cultural livestock traditions.
- The Omaha Nation Hydroponics Initiative received a USDA grant to help build greenhouses and educate tribal members on hydroponic farming, increasing the Tribe's food production control and capacity.
- Tribal Seed Banks and Libraries preserve and distribute culturally and historically significant seed species.



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