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What's for Dinner in Detroit?

*Recorded Mainstream and Fringe Food Stamp Retailers in Detroit

Pie chart legend

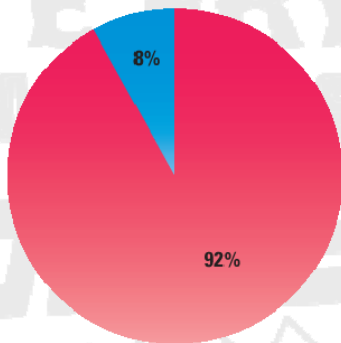
Fringe retailers: 92%

Gas stations, liquor stores, party stores, dollar stores, bakeries, pharmacies, convenience stores and other venues

Mainstream retailers: 8%

Small, medium, and large grocery stores and supermarkets

* MG analyzed all Detroit USDA Food Stamp venues and recoded them through the following steps. First, we conducted a manual record-by-record review of all Detroit food venues in the database. Second, we ran an electronic search for key words in the business name, such as liquor, bottle, beer, wine, party, dollar, bakery, etc. to flag venues we otherwise might miss that should be examined for possible recoding. Third, we conducted field inspections, to check overall data accuracy. Field inspections consisted of driving up and down most Detroit corridors and visiting the interiors of over 200 food venues. In many cases, the official name of the store did not reflect its appearance or the name on its exterior. For example, a store might have a neutral or upbeat name such as "Happy Foods" but on the store sign and/or building, the most prominent words might include some combination of liquor, beer, wine, party, lotto, and money orders, followed by food or groceries, in smaller type. Finally, we manually revisited each business record for final recoding decisions.



Why healthy food choice matters: MG has identified statistically significant relationships between improved access to mainstream food options and better diet-related public health outcomes. In short, where there is a greater access to mainstream grocery stores, premature death and suffering from diet-related diseases decreases. These effects are independent from other contributing factors such as income, race, and education.

What communities can do: Inventory the types of food stores you have in your community. Do they provide healthy food options? If they are approved to participate in the USDA Food Stamp program, do they follow those rules? How can your community partner with local stores to improve their offerings? And what can we all do to choose healthy foods more often once they become available?