

SPA Leadership  
Fall 2019 Research  
Pierson Brown

# Food Insecurity in Rural America

**Has the growth of food deserts  
promoted the rise of Dollar General  
Corp in rural areas?  
If so, to what extent?**

Research question for Fall literature review and policy memo

# Research Highlights

- ❑ **USDA Definition of Food Desert: “at least 500 people and/or at least 33 percent of the census tract population must reside more than one mile from a supermarket or large grocery store (for rural census tracts, the distance is more than 10 miles)”**
- ❑ **In 2017, Dollar General Corp. had a market value of \$22 billion, five times greater than Kroger Co., America’s largest true grocery chain**
- ❑ **“Spatial supermarket redlining” is the process of supermarkets building in wealthy suburbs because they see rural areas and food deserts as unprofitable, due to their low-income populations**

# Policy Memo

- If action is not taken to improve food access across the country, Congress is actively contributing to the detriment of the American people.
- Many programs and services that people with similar issues rely on in urban areas are not available beyond city limits, including public transportation, food pantries, and soup kitchens
- March 2019: Senator Mark R. Warner [D-VA] introduced the Healthy Food Access for All Americans Act to the 116th Congress, calling for tax credits given to those who build or renovate grocery stores in food deserts. Senator Warner's idea would also provide grant funding for permanent food banks as well as temporary programs like mobile food banks or farmers markets
  - Did not pass committee
- Proposal: Acceptance of Senate Bill S. 786, which would provide incentives for supermarkets to expand into food deserts and promote the growth of local, nonprofit food programs
  - Empowers local communities to solve solutions at a smaller, more effective level
  - Promotes economic growth
  - Supermarkets more likely to comply if incentivized to expand

# Potential Spring Project Partners

## Martha's Table

- Focus on child development and giving each child the opportunity to thrive
- Main initiatives
  - Quality education beginning at six weeks of age
  - Healthy nutritional resources
  - Family engagement in child development

## A Wider Circle

- Main mission □ End Poverty
- Holistic approach
- Main programs
  - Workforce development
  - Neighborhood revitalization
  - Policy initiative to update the federal poverty threshold

# Works Cited

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Sullivan, Zoe. “Behind Tulsa’s Fight Against the Rising Threat of Dollar Stores.” *NextCity.org*, Dec 17, 2018. ProQuest, <http://proxyau.wrlc.org/login?url=https://search-proquestcom.proxyau.wrlc.org/docview/2157943120?accountid=8285>.

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