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# The Peapod & Neighbor Capital Healthy Families Project

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Peapod



NEIGHBOR CAPITAL

## Research Summary

In autumn of 2009, Peapod and Neighbor Capital began to strategize on solutions for Chicago's Food Desert communities. Later that year, Peapod retained Mari Gallagher Research & Consulting Group to complement and enhance the impact of their Healthy Families collaboration through robust empirical analysis. As part of this effort, MG conducted a block-level study to identify the greatest at-risk families in the Food Desert who might be suffering now or in the future from obesity, diabetes and other diet-related conditions. This document provides the summary of our findings.

We calculated Food Access, Food Desert, and Food Balance Scores for every block in the City of Chicago (over 18,000-plus non-zero population blocks), the surrounding suburbs, and part of Indiana. For each block, we measured the distance to the closest small, medium, and large mainstream grocery store as well as the closest fringe food establishment and weighted the block based on population density. Block-level food access data was statistically paired with track-level diet-related morbidity data. Our new methodology calculates Years of Potential Life Gain. In other words, we predict the level to which increased mainstream food access would likely contribute to additional life gained due to the grocer's presence, rather than life lost due to its absence, while accounting for other contributing factors such as income, race, and education.<sup>1</sup> To identify the areas that would benefit the most from the Healthy Families Project, we added each city block into our statistical database one at a time, recalculating the potential impact of increased mainstream food access as each new hypothetical improvement was added and the previous hypothetical improvement was removed, to see which block-level improvements would likely 1) reduce diabetes overall, 2) positively impact the greatest number of children, and 3) positively impact the greatest population overall.

As illustrated in the following map, the greatest opportunities for intervention for the top 100 blocks citywide in each of the three impact categories are in portions of Zip Code 60636. Portions of Zip Code 60628 would impact the reduction of diabetes for the general population, and a small handful of blocks in Zip Code 60644 would positively impact children. Watch our website for more information, data, and maps as they become available: [www.marigallagher.com](http://www.marigallagher.com).

*We are pleased to sponsor this report because the block-level analysis presented here provides the information needed to help children and families in greatest nutritional need in the Food Desert. Our goal is to help reduce obesity and other diet-related diseases so that children especially can grow up to enjoy long, happy, healthy, and productive lives.*

Scott DeGraeve  
Senior Vice President & General Manager

More information on Peapod at  
[www.peapod.com](http://www.peapod.com).

Neighbor Capital is a social enterprise that partners with key businesses, researchers, local leaders and neighbors to develop scalable solutions that empower local communities. More information at  
[www.neighborcapital.com](http://www.neighborcapital.com).

<sup>1</sup> For more on our methodology and the data behind the map included in this briefing, download *Examining the Impact of Food Deserts on Public Health in Chicago*, a 2006 breakthrough study that popularized the term "Food Desert" nationally and encouraged Congressman Bobby Rush to enter "Food Desert" language into the Farm Bill (also view our 2009 update). Our firm was the first to develop a block-by-block metric for "Food Deserts" and "Food Balance" linked with health measures and has done similar work in Detroit, rural Michigan, Louisville, Harlem, Richmond, Savannah, Los Angeles and Birmingham. These and other documents are available at [www.marigallagher.com](http://www.marigallagher.com).

## Block-level Opportunities for Greatest Impacts on Children & Families

