

# NJEDA's Food Security Products to Alleviate Food Insecurity and Combat Food Deserts

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March 2024

# About NJEDA

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) serves as the State's principal agency for driving economic growth.

The NJEDA is committed to making New Jersey a national model for **inclusive and sustainable economic development** by focusing on key strategies to help build **strong and dynamic communities, create good jobs for New Jersey residents, and provide pathways to a stronger and fairer economy**. Through partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders, the NJEDA creates and implements initiatives to **enhance the economic vitality and quality of life** in the State and **strengthen New Jersey's long-term economic competitiveness**.

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**NJEDA**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

HELPING TO BUILD A  
STRONGER AND FAIRER  
NEW JERSEY ECONOMY

# Why NJEDA?

- ▶ The **New Jersey Economic Development Authority** has a long history of supporting businesses of all sizes to grow and invest in New Jersey with the aim of building a **stronger, fairer New Jersey economy**
- ▶ The Authority offers a broad portfolio of economic and community development tools, such as
  - Tax credits to incentivize job creation and capital investment;
  - Investment tools to support and strengthen New Jersey's communities;
  - Financial resources for small businesses, including those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic;
  - Support for new supermarkets and healthy food access options in food desert communities

# Governor Phil Murphy has equipped NJEDA with more than \$300 million to strengthen food security in NJ

Over the past three years, NJEDA has significantly expanded its food security programs to build on Governor Murphy's commitment to a stronger, fairer New Jersey.



## Sustain & Serve NJ

\$57.5M grant program for nonprofits to purchase meals from restaurants and distribute those meals at no cost in their community.



## Food Security Planning Grant

\$1.5M grant program for local governments to plan for leveraging a distressed asset in a Food Desert Community (FDC) to improve food access and security.



## Food Desert Relief Act

\$240M in tax credits, grants, loans, and technical assistance to increase food access and develop new approaches to alleviate food deserts.



## Food Retail Innovation in Delivery Grant

\$2.5M grant program to assist New Jersey food retailers to purchase refrigerated lockers to expand access to grocery delivery within FDCs.



## CSIT Food & Agriculture R&D Grant

\$75,000 grants for early-stage start-ups focused on developing new innovations and solutions that address food insecurity.



## Atlantic City Food Security Grants Pilot Program

\$5.25M pilot grant program aimed to fund projects that can positively impact Atlantic City residents' ability to access fresh, affordable, and healthy food

# THE FOOD DESERT RELIEF ACT

The Food Desert Relief Act is part of the **New Jersey Economic Recovery Act of 2020 (ERA)**, a package of tax incentive, financing, and grant programs Governor Murphy signed into law in January 2021 to address the ongoing economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and build a stronger, fairer New Jersey economy.



Facilitate development, construction, and sustainable operations of new supermarkets and grocery stores

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Strengthen existing community assets by equipping them with the necessary equipment and infrastructure to provide healthier food options

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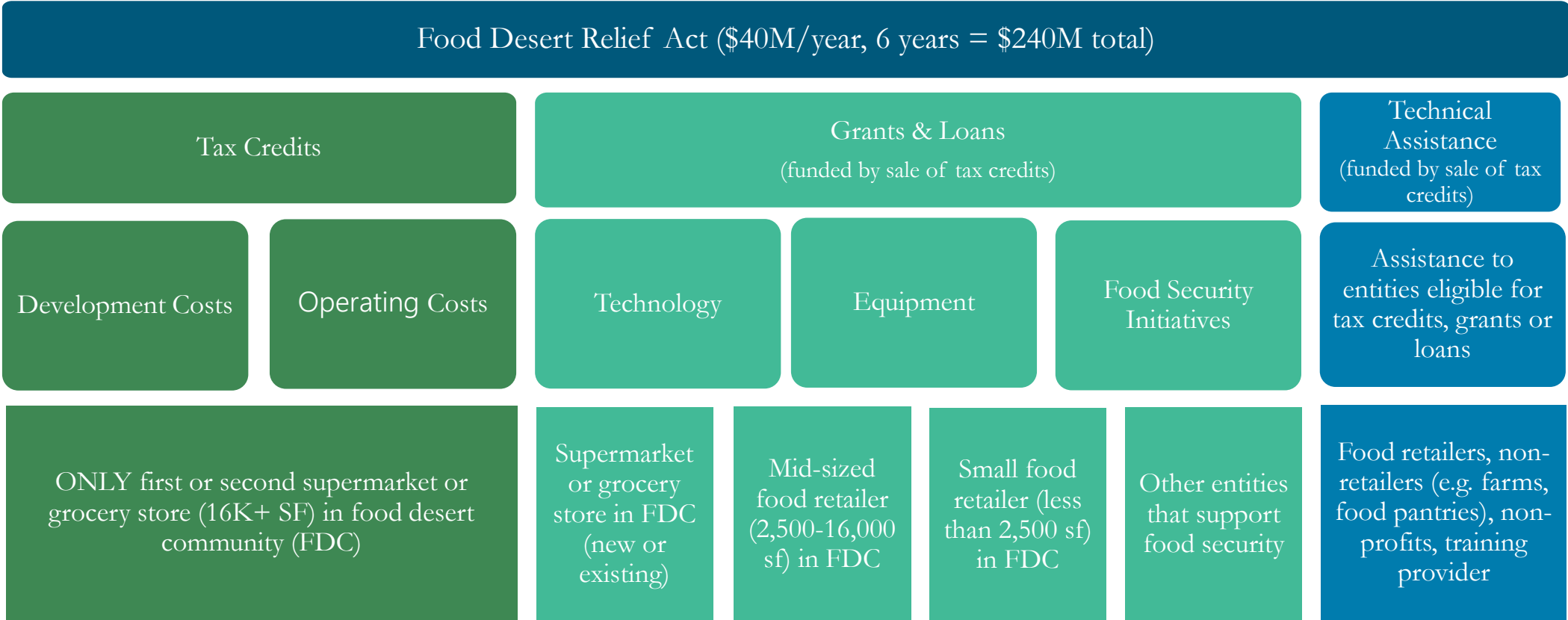
Help food retailers respond to the shift to e-commerce, including for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

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Identify and foster innovative solutions to alleviate food insecurity

# The Food Desert Relief Act creates new strategies for NJEDA to address food security



Learn more at <https://www.njeda.com/food-desert-relief-program>

# Food Desert Community Designations

# What is a Food Desert Community

Based on literature reviews and community input, NJDCA performed a **factor analysis** including 40+ variables to identify the variables that together best signal the presence of a Food Desert Community.

<b>Food Retail Environment</b>	<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Economic Factors</b>	<b>Health Factors</b>	<b>Community Factors</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2021 Limited Supermarket Area (NJDCA analysis)</li><li>• 2021 Low Access Score (NJDCA analysis)</li><li>• Food Swamp – unhealthy food access area (NJDCA analysis)</li><li>• CDC Modified Retail Food Environment Index</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Single mother head % of households</li><li>• % non-Hispanic white</li><li>• % African-American</li><li>• % Hispanic</li><li>• % of adults with a HS diploma</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unemployment rate (block group)</li><li>• Poverty rate</li><li>• Per capita income</li><li>• % of households receiving public assistance</li><li>• % of households receiving SNAP benefits</li><li>• WIC participation rate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• % of pop. that is obese (Health Dept. area)</li><li>• % of adults rating health as poor or fair</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• % of households with internet access</li><li>• % of housing non-seasonally vacant</li><li>• % of households that are housing cost burdened</li><li>• % of households with no vehicle</li><li>• DCA Walkability Score</li><li>• Municipal violent crime rate, 2016-18</li></ul>

# New Jersey's 50 Food Desert Communities

- The FDRA directed EDA to work with the Departments of Community Affairs and Agriculture to **designate up to 50 areas of the state as Food Desert Communities**
- Designations were informed by a combination of rigorous, **data-driven analysis** and **community input**
- More than **1.5 million NJ residents** live in a Food Desert Community (FDC)
- **All 21 counties** have at least one FDC
- FDC designations include 57 municipalities
  - In most cases, just *portions* of a municipality are included in FDC designation, not the whole municipality
- 6 municipalities (Camden, Jersey City, Lakewood, Newark, Paterson, Trenton) are subdivided due to the size of the population residing in an FDC
- Population size of each FDC ranges from 1,135 to 69,264



The interactive map of Food Desert Communities can be found at <https://www.njeda.gov/food-desert-relief-tax-credit-auction/>

Rank	Food Desert Name	County	Composite Food Desert Factor Score	Food Desert Population (2020)
1	North, Central and South Camden/Woodlynne*	Camden	86.2	44,702
2	Atlantic City*/Ventnor	Atlantic	78.8	41,382
3	Newark South	Essex	74.2	42,713
4	Newark West	Essex	72.7	49,065
5	Camden East/Pennsauken	Camden	72.1	49,689
6	Trenton West	Mercer	71.8	27,151
7	Newark North and Central	Essex	70.6	50,855
8	Newark East	Essex	69.7	40,427
9	Salem City*	Salem	69.6	5,296
10	Passaic City	Passaic	68.4	39,336
11	Trenton East	Mercer	68.1	57,113
12	Bridgeton/Fairfield Twp/Lawrence Twp*	Cumberland	65.3	29,167
13	Paterson South	Passaic	64.5	35,825
14	New Brunswick City	Middlesex	64.1	49,408
15	Paterson North	Passaic	63.9	46,602
16	Irvington Township	Essex	61.2	31,393
17	Asbury Park City	Monmouth	60.8	14,547
18	Jersey City South	Hudson	60.5	68,636
19	East Orange City	Essex	59.9	65,254
20	Penns Grove/Carneys Point	Salem	59.9	13,474
21	Elizabeth City	Union	58.5	69,264
22	Orange/West Orange/Montclair	Essex	57.8	50,522
23	Jersey City Central	Hudson	57.6	58,929
24	Perth Amboy City	Middlesex	57.0	30,997
25	Lindenwold/Clementon*	Camden	56.8	19,469

# Food Desert Community Designations (#1 - 25)

*Asterisks indicate that the entirety of that municipality is included in the Food Desert Community (FDC). In most cases, an FDC does not include a whole municipality. Please use the [FDC mapping tool](#) to see the boundaries of NJEDA-designated FDCs.*

Rank	Food Desert Name	County	Composite Food Desert Factor Score	Food Desert Population (2020)
26	Plainfield City	Union	56.4	37,829
27	Pleasantville/Absecon	Atlantic	56.0	9,874
28	Red Bank Borough	Monmouth	55.6	1,508
29	Lakewood North	Ocean	52.1	49,364
30	Jersey City North	Hudson	51.5	62,363
31	Woodbine Borough*	Cape May	51.2	2,128
32	Long Branch City	Monmouth	51.2	27,013
33	Millville/Commercial Twp*	Cumberland	49.9	25,634
34	Prospect Park/Haledon/Hawthorne	Passaic	49.4	11,846
35	Keansburg Borough*	Monmouth	49.1	9,755
36	Paulsboro Borough	Gloucester	48.8	2,282
37	Lakewood South	Ocean	48.5	49,831
38	North Bergen/West New York/Guttenberg	Hudson	48.4	48,711
39	Fairview Borough	Bergen	48.3	1,135
40	Egg Harbor City*	Atlantic	47.1	4,396
41	Burlington City	Burlington	46.1	6,101
42	Linden/Roselle	Union	45.7	36,659
43	Vineland City	Cumberland	45.2	13,273
44	Phillipsburg Town	Warren	44.4	13,823
45	Bayonne City	Hudson	42.7	28,718
46	Dover Town	Morris	42.5	10,478
47	Bound Brook Borough	Somerset	42.4	1,823
48	Union City	Hudson	34.9	23,926
49	High Bridge Borough	Hunterdon	26.5	1,221
50	Montague Township*	Sussex	25.1	3,792

# Food Desert Community Designations (#26-50)

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# PRODUCT OVERVIEW



Food Desert Relief Supermarket Tax Credit  
&  
Food Desert Relief Tax Credit Auction

# Food Desert Relief Tax Credit Auction

NJ corporations and insurance companies can bid for a **tax discount of up to 15%**

Credits can be applied to  
**Corporation Business Tax  
& Insurance Premiums  
Tax**

Tax credits can first be  
used for tax year 2023\*  
with **7-year carry-forward**

Minimum tax credit  
request of **\$500,000**

Minimum price of  
**\$0.85** per dollar

**No commitment or  
compliance requirements**  
after transaction closes



Total of **\$15M** in tax credits auctioned in 2023


**\$13.075M** in proceeds from the auction will fund grant, loan, and technical assistance programs in designated **Food Desert Communities**, as specified by the Food Desert Relief Act

# Food Desert Relief Supermarket Tax Credit Program

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 Provides tax credits to incentivize **development and operations of new supermarkets and grocery stores**. **Currently has \$225M available in the form of tax credits**

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 Applications are accepted on a **rolling basis**

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 Targeted to the designated **Food Desert Communities**

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 Bolster **access to nutritious foods** for SNAP- and WIC-eligible New Jerseyans

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 Encourage **longevity of supermarkets** after tax credits end, for a lasting impact on food security

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 Program **is funded to accept applications through 2027**

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**Now Accepting Applications:** <https://www.njeda.gov/food-desert-relief-tax-credit-program/>

# Food Retail Innovation in Delivery Grant (FRIDG)

# What is the Food Retail Innovation in Delivery Grant (FRIDG)?

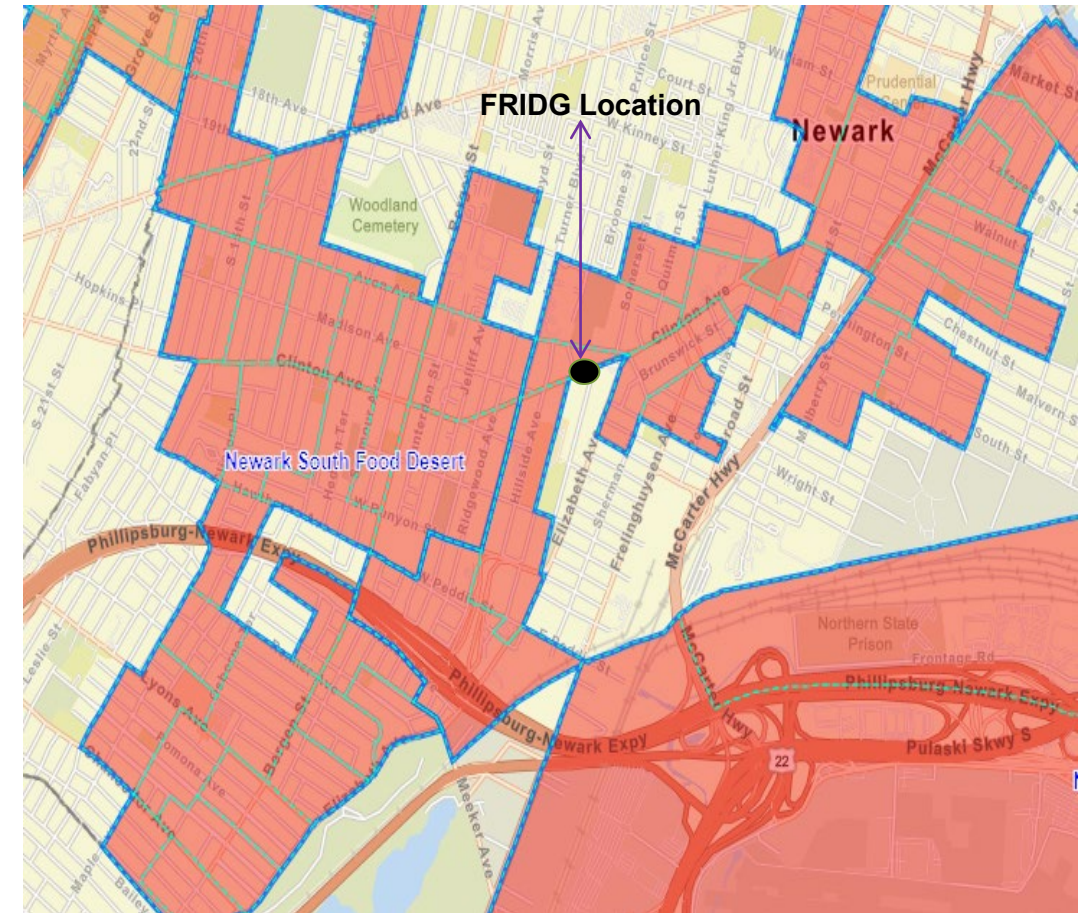
- ▶ Subsidizing the cost of self-contained, temperature-controlled lockers for food retailers to place within designated Food Desert Communities (FDCs), up to \$250,000
- ▶ Intended to increase deliveries into FDCs where residents may not have easy access to a grocery store
- ▶ Targeted toward retailers that already are certified to accept SNAP benefits online to allow for low-income SNAP beneficiaries in FDCs to place online orders to the locker units
- ▶ Program will serve as a time-limited pilot to help inform future programming under the Food Desert Relief Act



Now Accepting Applications: <https://www.njeda.gov/fridg/>

# FRIDG – Active Grant

- ▶ NJEDA awarded its first approval under the FRIDG program on December 19, 2023, which will help expand access to fresh groceries in Newark's South Ward.
  - Newark South is ranked #3 in our FDC list with nearly 43,000 residents currently lacking access to a full-service grocery store
- ▶ Brookdale ShopRite Inc, a family-owned business with ShopRite stores in Newark's Central Ward and in Bloomfield, is the first food retailer to receive a grant of \$250,000 under the FRIDG program.
  - The grant award will support the purchase and installation of a temperature-controlled food locker at the Shani Baraka Women's Resource Center.
- ▶ Once the locker is installed, residents will be able to place online grocery orders from the Brookdale ShopRite, including orders eligible for purchase with SNAP benefits.
  - Brookdale ShopRite has also committed to waiving all delivery fees for groceries delivered to the locker



# Atlantic City Food Security Grants Pilot Program

# Atlantic City Food Security Grants Pilot Program

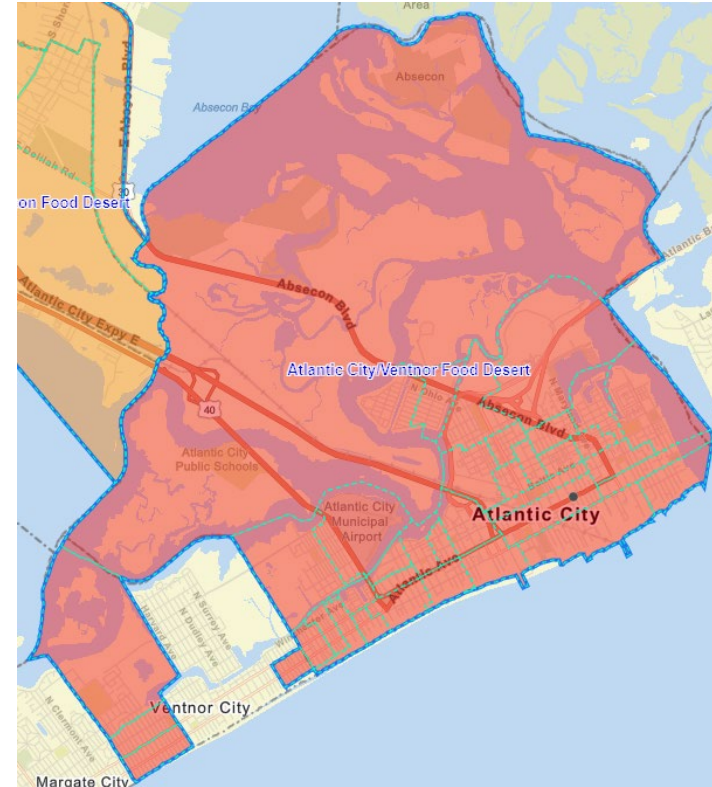
The Atlantic City Food Security Grants program is a pilot program awarding grants between \$50,000 and \$500,000 for projects to strengthen food access and food security in Atlantic City.

## Program Goals

1. Improve Atlantic City residents' ability to access fresh, affordable, healthy food
2. Expand the reach and capacity of entities enabling food access and food security in Atlantic City

# Atlantic City Food Security Grants Pilot Program

- ▶ A pilot program awarding grants between \$50,000 and \$500,000 for projects to strengthen food access and food security in Atlantic City
- ▶ Intended to fund for-profits, nonprofits and/or government entities
  - Must have been in existence for at least two years at the time of application,
  - Must currently serve in any manner residents of Atlantic City/Ventnor FDC
  - Must be able to demonstrate existing services related to food access and/or food security
  - Must meet other eligibility criteria set forth by EDA
- ▶ Funded projects must be completed within two years of grant execution.
- ▶ Acquisition of land or buildings will not be considered.



**Name:** Atlantic City/Ventnor FDC  
**Population:** 41,382  
**County:** Atlantic  
**FDC Factor Score:** 95  
**Food Desert Community Rank:** 2

**Applications expected to open in early 2024.**

# Food Security Planning Grants



To advance the goals of the Food Desert Relief Act (FDRA), part of the Economic Recovery Act of 2020, the EDA used up to **\$1,500,000** in economic planning services funds to create a **competitive planning grant program** **focused on leveraging distressed assets** in designated Food Desert Communities (FDCs) in New Jersey to improve food access and food security.



The Food Security Planning Grant Program is the Authority's first pilot program as part of the Food Desert Relief Act, providing grants between **\$75,000 to \$125,000** to fund development of plans to improve food access specifically within the **newly designated FDCs**.



# NJEDA Sponsorship

# Community Mobile Market by AtlantiCare

- ▶ In November 2023, started offering **market and meal distribution** via multi-part market series
- ▶ Serving approximately **120-150 people per week**
- ▶ Patrons offered a choice of **3-4 healthy, nutritionally balanced meals**, with **diabetic friendly meals** made available as requested



**TERIYAKI CHICKEN  
STIR FRY WITH  
GRILLED PINEAPPLE**

**WHAT'S IN YOUR BAG?**

- 1 Bag of Teriyaki Chicken Fillets
- 1 Bag of Mixed Stir Fry Veggies
- 2 Pouches Brown Rice and Quinoa

This Week's Fruit: Pineapple

**AtlantiCare** **NJEDA**



"This is the dish that I made from the mobile market today. Teriyaki chicken, stir fry vegetables, brown rice and quinoa. It is delicious!! I wanted to try brown rice and quinoa before but I didn't think I'd like it. I love it!! Thank you all so much!!"

# Virtua Health for Eat Well Atlantic City

- ▶ Modified NJ Transit bus that serves as a **supermarket on wheels**
- ▶ Working towards **increasing access to affordable food** that supports healthy dietary patterns
- ▶ Starting in November 2023, the Eat Well Mobile Market has been operating from **two locations** (Brigantine Homes and Atlantic Marina)
- ▶ Mobile market will **continue to serve AC** in the coming months



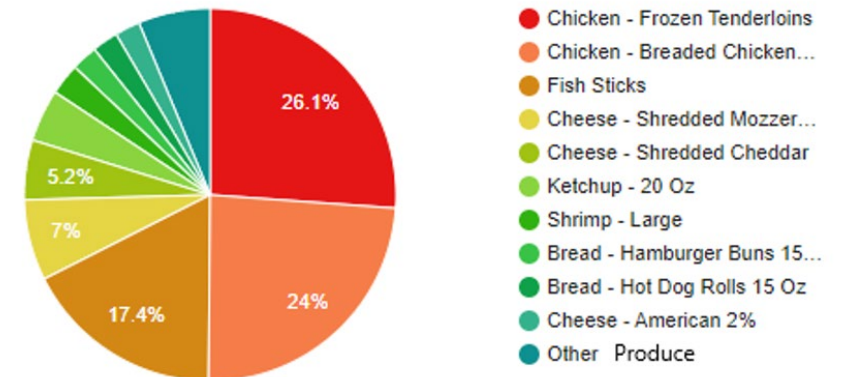
*NJ Star-Ledger*, February 23, 2024: It's a cold, rainy morning in Atlantic City but not even the gloomy weather can dampen Rosetta Butler's joyful mood. "Oh no, not today!" she says, shaking her head, "Because today's Friday and that's when the bus comes."

The bus that 58-year-old Rosetta, who's a longtime resident of Atlantic Marina, an affordable housing community on Maryland Avenue, is referring to is South Jersey healthcare system Virtua Health's "Eat Well" mobile grocery store, which offers fresh produce, meat, eggs, frozen food and dairy products out of a 40-foot modified bus.

When the bus pulls into the parking lot of her housing complex at 10 a.m., Rosetta is ready to shop. She's among the first in a group of about a dozen others to hop on and within minutes, her bag is full: "I've got peanut butter, potatoes, a loaf of bread, and some lunch meat," she says excitedly, showing off her \$10.35 purchase.

"This right here, it's a godsend," says Rosetta, motioning to the bus. "It's a really big blessing for people like me, who can't make it to the market easily ...you know, for people who can't drive, are older, or have health issues."

Top 10 Product Sales





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