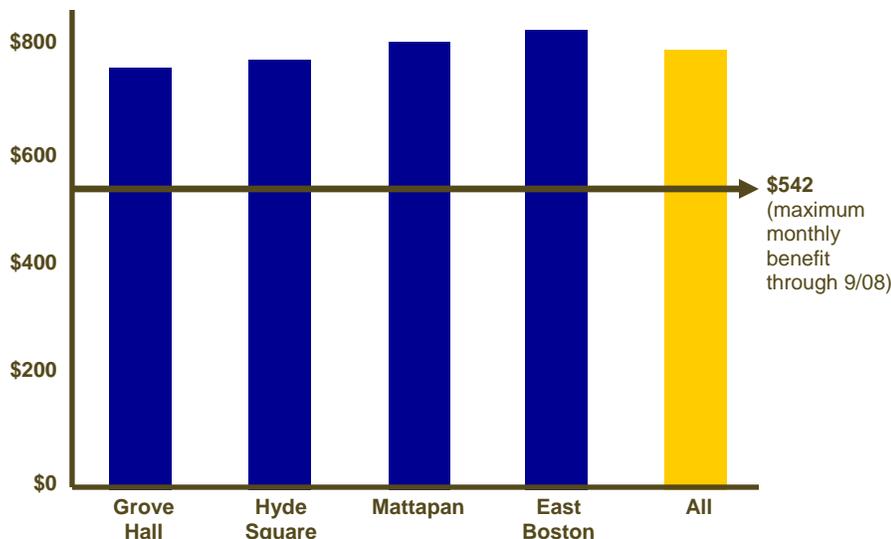


# The Real Cost of a Healthy Diet

## Boston results

Cost of TFP in four neighborhoods exceeds maximum food stamp benefit

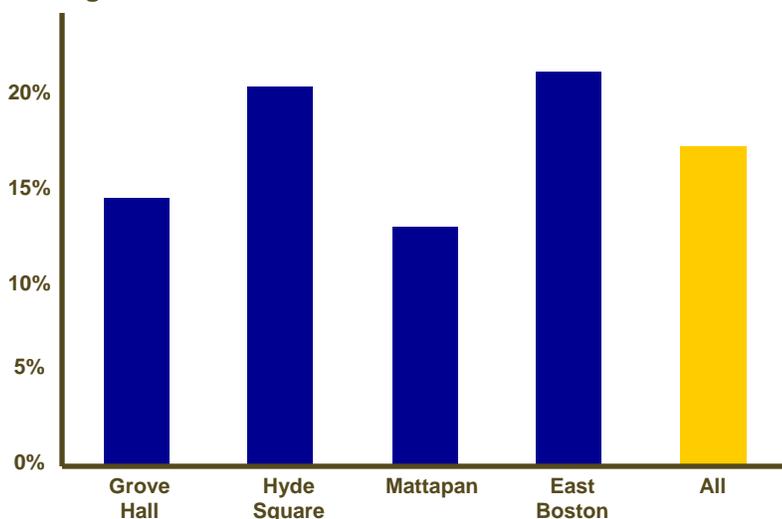


Results are based on data collected in four stores in each of four Boston neighborhoods (16 stores total). The average monthly cost of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) was \$752, 39% higher than the maximum monthly food stamp benefit for a family of four. On average, the TFP could not be purchased with the maximum food stamp benefit in any of the participating neighborhoods; **the maximum benefit was sufficient to purchase the TFP in only two of sixteen surveyed stores.** Families in Boston relying on small stores for their grocery needs pay the highest prices—nearly \$800 according to our results.

### Healthy items missing from grocery shelves

The TFP food list contains 104 items. On average, **16% of items were not available** in participating Boston stores. The most commonly missing items were whole wheat products, such as bread, cereal, rice, and pasta. Low-fat dairy products and lean meats were also seldom available. Boston stores quite frequently offered fresh fruits and vegetables but the quality was often poor, especially in small stores.

### Percent of items missing



September 2008

# Boston resources

## Partner and advocacy organizations

### The Food Project, Dorchester

**Mission:** To grow a thoughtful and productive community of youth and adults from diverse backgrounds who work together to build a sustainable food system.  
**Website:** [www.thefoodproject.org](http://www.thefoodproject.org)

### Project Bread, East Boston

**Mission:** To alleviate, prevent, and ultimately end hunger in Massachusetts.  
**Website:** [www.projectbread.org](http://www.projectbread.org)

### Project Right, Inc., Grove Hall

**Mission:** To strengthen and coordinate existing services and programs for our community through grass-roots organizing of neighborhood residents.  
**Website:** [www.projectright.org](http://www.projectright.org)

### Hyde Square Task Force, Jamaica Plain

**Mission:** To develop the skills of youth and their families so that they are empowered to enhance their own lives and build a strong and vibrant urban community.  
**Website:** [www.hydesquare.org](http://www.hydesquare.org)

### Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition

**Mission:** To draw on the wonderful ethnic and cultural diversity of the Mattapan community to promote a healthy living environment, with a focus on access to healthy foods and the promotion of physical fitness for all ages.

### New England Regional Anti Hunger Network (NERAHN)

**Mission:** To reduce hunger by maximizing resources through collaborative efforts; and to work collectively to design and implement action on state, regional, and national levels  
**Website:** [www.nerahn.org](http://www.nerahn.org)

### Massachusetts Law Reform Institute/ Food Stamp Improvement Coalition

**Mission:** To reduce hunger by maximizing resources through collaborative efforts; and to work collectively to design and implement action on state, regional, and national levels  
**Website:** <http://mlri.org>

### Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness

**Mission:** To improve community health through a comprehensive initiative addressing issues related to food and fitness. The Collaborative is comprised of dynamic individuals representing a diverse group of sectors, including healthcare, government, education, youth development, food systems, social services, and residents.  
**Websites:**  
[http://www.masspreventioncenter.org/Food\\_and\\_Fitness/food\\_and\\_fitness.html](http://www.masspreventioncenter.org/Food_and_Fitness/food_and_fitness.html)  
<http://www.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=75&CID=383&NID=61&LanguageID=0>

## Local policy actions

**Promote policies to implement or reward local food system improvements.** Models for expanding access to healthy food in low-income communities exist and could be replicated elsewhere with government support. Boston-based examples include:

- Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness, a citywide coalition that aims to improve access to local, healthy, affordable food;
- Equipping farmers' markets with wireless EBT (electronic benefit transfer) card readers, which can improve access to local fruits and vegetables in communities with limited fresh food options; and
- The Boston Bounty Bucks program, which doubles food stamp dollars when people spend between \$5 and \$10 on their EBT card at participating farmers' markets.

## Neighborhood profiles

	Roxbury*	Jamaica Plain**	Mattapan	East Boston
<b>Population (2000)</b>	55,663	38,074	37,371	38,413
<i>Black/African American</i>	36,454	6,842	30,182	1,375
<i>Hispanic</i>	13,955	8,642	4,573	14,970
<i>Non-Hispanic White</i>	2,520	19,369	1,236	19,104
<b>Poverty Rate</b>	27%	21%	22%	20%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$27,133	\$41,524	\$32,748	\$31,311

\*Grove Hall is located in Roxbury, \*\*Hyde Square is located in Jamaica Plain