

TITLE: Perceptions of Food Access and Availability for Residents of a Rural, Oregon Town

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STUDENT SUBMISSION: Yes

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Rural food access and availability/Program developers and Policy Makers

ABSTRACT: Background: Rural communities lack access to affordable, healthy foods. Purpose: This study assessed the current food environment and perceptions of healthy food access for residents of Oakridge, Oregon. Methods: 120 adult residents completed online surveys, which assessed grocery store use, perceptions of healthy food availability, and food security. The Southwest Chicago Food Store Audit Instrument was used to assess the food environment. Results/Outcomes: Most residents (60%) report lack of grocery stores, and affordable food in town (74%), and state they travel out of town for groceries (68%; M=61 miles round trip). Eight stores sell food in Oakridge, where only five sell fresh produce and six have refrigerated dairy. Conclusions/Implications: Resident perceptions and audit findings align that there is limited access and availability of healthy food options in town. Many residents travel long distances to buy affordable food for their families. Findings highlight a need for improved availability and price of groceries in Oakridge.

OBJECTIVE(S): Attendees will be able to describe the food environment in Oakridge, Oregon. Attendees will be able to compare resident perceptions to availability of different foods in Oakridge.
