



REINVESTMENT
FUND



LIMITED SUPERMARKET
ACCESS ANALYSIS



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Data Informed Investments in Georgia

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Between 2018 and 2022 Reinvestment Fund financed four healthy food retail projects in Georgia. Among them:

1. Clinch Memorial Hospital is a critical access hospital serving southeast rural Georgia. In 2021, the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) supported the launch of a mobile market selling food to nearby Limited-Access Areas.
2. Food for Less is a low-cost grocery store in Albany that replaced a grocery store that closed in 2018. With the only full-service grocery closed, travel distances to the next nearest store were far enough to make the area Limited-Access. In 2020, HFFI funds supported the development of the new full-service grocery store with a business model built on selling fresh food at affordable prices.

Glossary

Supermarket The LSA analysis measures access to healthy food by identifying areas that are well-served by supermarkets and those that have relatively limited and inequitable access to supermarkets. In this report, Reinvestment Fund uses supermarkets (grocery stores with at least \$2 million in annual sales) as a proxy for healthy food access because a review of the relevant research shows that supermarkets, compared to smaller stores (e.g., corner stores), most consistently offer the greatest variety of healthy foods at the lowest prices.

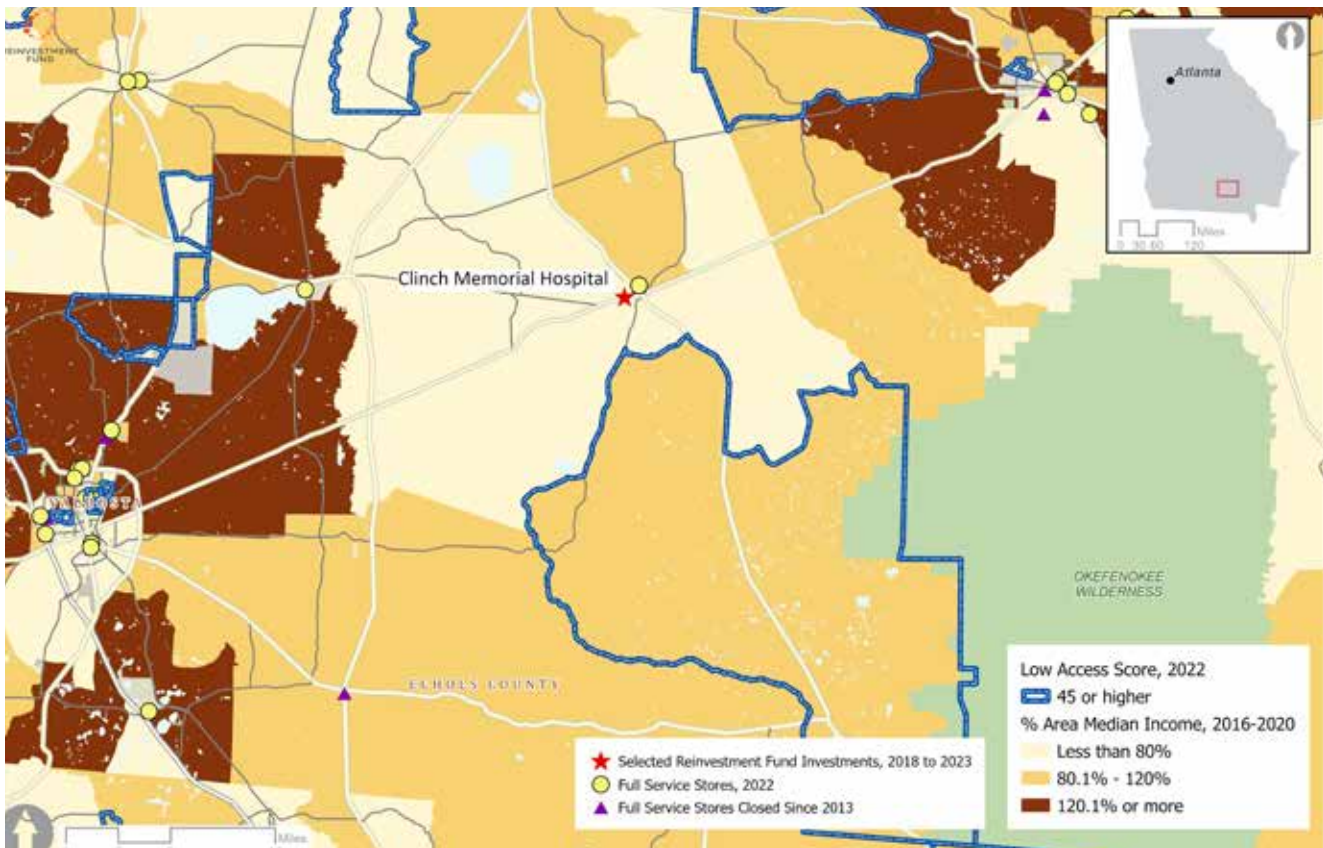
Low-Access Score is the percentage by which a block group's distance to the nearest supermarket would need to be reduced to equal the typical distance for well-served block groups in that class (well-served block groups have median incomes that are at least 120% of the state or metro median). Block groups with Low-Access Scores greater than or equal to 45 are considered Limited-Access. In Limited-Access block groups, residents must travel almost twice as far to a supermarket as residents in well-served block groups with similar population density and car ownership.

Limited-Access Areas are single block groups, or collections of block groups, where residents must travel almost twice as far to a full-service supermarket as a resident in a block group with similar population density and a median household income that is at least 120% of the **state or metro median**.

The Clinch Memorial Hospital is in Homerville, GA, a small town surrounded by rural and remote block groups. Map 3 shows there is just one full-service grocery store in town and no other nearby food retail. The hospital's mobile market will serve rural residents in the surrounding counties, including the Limited-Access Area outlined in dark blue south of the hospital. Support from the mobile market is an important piece of an equitable food retail landscape. Most residents in this Limited-Access Area must travel around 23 miles to get to a full-service store; the healthy food options at the new market help reduce that burden.

Reinvestment Fund's national analysis shows that Limited-Access Areas are disproportionately located in middle-income places in rural areas. Map 3 shows that is also the case in Homerville where the median incomes for residents in both Limited-Access Areas to the north and south of Homerville are between 80% and 120% of the state's median household income, between \$48,000 and \$72,000.

Map 3. Food Retail Location, Limited-Access Areas by Income in Homerville, GA – 2022

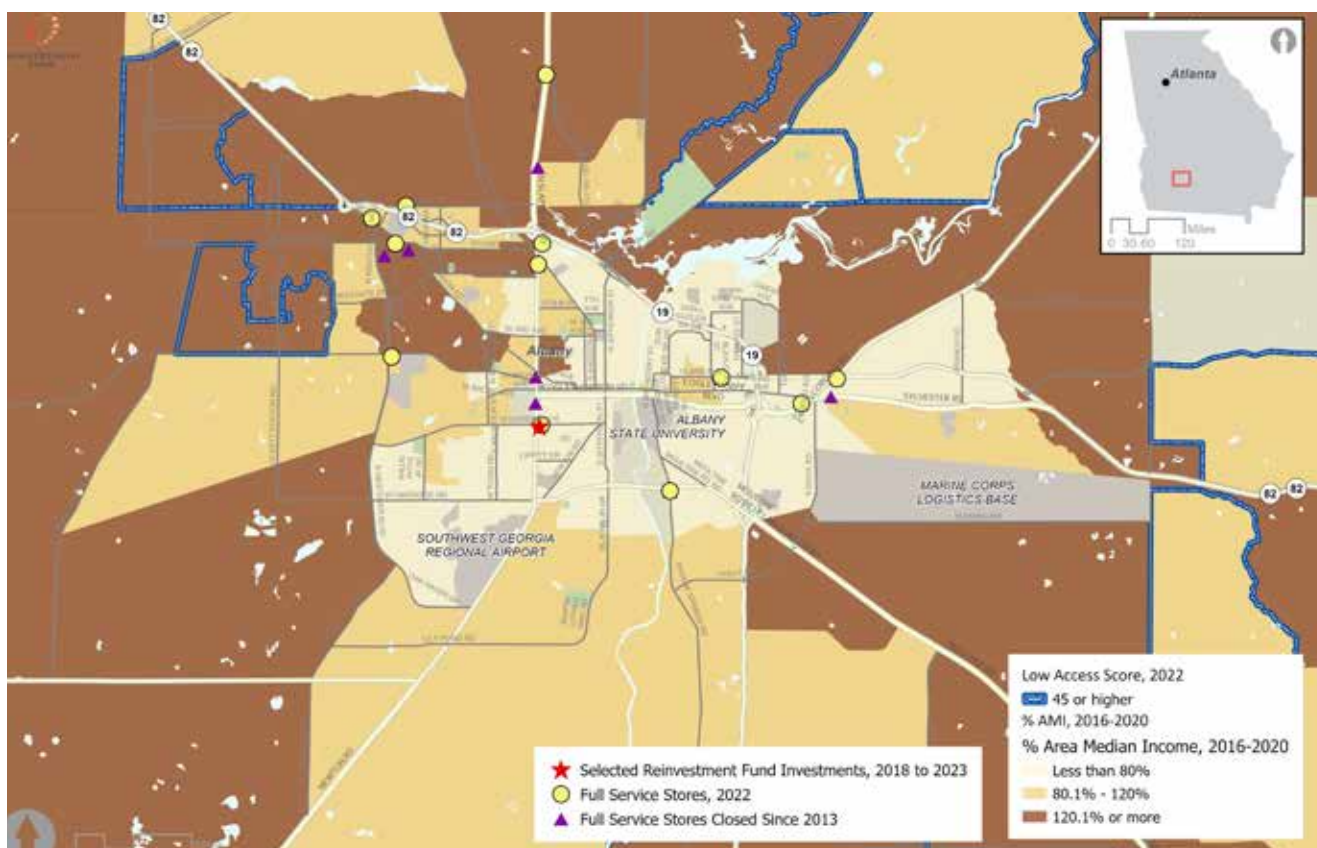


5. https://www.yahoo.com/now/food-less-oasis-eradicates-southeast-230500657.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAACyl_Sdd23Z9JNV6e0IIBXpwljxfaiC61sUTAiavo0epe5q95wSADZOWENkztusf8oqNWwQKljNAUQ25A-PaBuTKM2ecSV

Proximity is one component of food access; another is the ability to afford groceries. Food for Less in Albany, GA is a full-service grocery store under the Piggly Wiggly banner with a business model that offers discounted fresh food. Map 4 shows the area surrounding Food for Less has a median household income of less than 80% of the state median, about \$48,000. HFFI's investment in Food for Less helps create greater food access for its community in two ways: 1) by locating in a previously Limited-Access Area; and 2) by committing to low prices.

The store opened in January 2022 with substantial support from the City of Albany, replacing a full-service store that had closed in 2018.⁵ In addition to the store replaced by Food for Less, Map 4 shows several local store closures reduced the number of food retail options available for residents. Without Food for Less, residents of this block group would be living in a Limited-Access Area, i.e., they would have to travel nearly twice as far as residents in a similarly dense block group to their nearest grocery store.

Map 4. Food Retail Location, Limited-Access Areas by Income in Albany, GA – 2022



Reinvestment Fund guides and contextualizes its investments with analytics like the Limited Supermarket Access analysis in tandem with neighborhood metrics like household income. Understanding the economic and food retail landscape of a place helps tell the story about the ways that projects like the Clinch Memorial Hospital's Mobile Market and Food for Less matter for residents in their communities. These projects also demonstrate the need for both traditional, brick and mortar retail and innovative solutions to address food access across the country where demand for a larger store might be limited due to a dispersed population, limited spending power, or both.



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About Reinvestment Fund

Reinvestment Fund is a national mission-driven financial institution that creates opportunity for underserved people and places through partnerships. We marshal the capital, analytics, and expertise necessary to build strong, healthy, and more equitable communities. Learn more at www.reinvestment.com.