

Democratizing Access to Healthy Foods

“It’s a great deal of trouble just to feed a family.” —Rosa Flores, Austin, Texas

Consider these facts about Austin.

Austin stands out as the most economically segregated major metro area in the country, where minorities, especially Latinxs, lack access to affordable housing and healthy food.

- Rosa Flores lives in eastern Travis County. She is among those who must travel many miles to the nearest full-service grocery store to buy fresh food at a lower price. We consider Rosa and her family to be **food insecure**—that is, they lack consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy lifestyle. The Flores family lives in what is known as a “**food desert**,” which is a geographic area with severely limited affordable, healthy food choices (especially fresh sources of protein and fresh fruits and vegetables).



Image Source: resat_dongel/iStock.com

Where are the majority of full-service grocery stores in Austin? *In districts where most of the residents are white and wealthy.*

- District 2, where 69 percent of the 80,004 residents are Hispanic, has only two grocery stores. By contrast, there are nine such stores in District 10, where 9.3 percent of the 80,839 residents are Hispanic and 78.3 percent are Anglo. The difference in median household income is about \$90,000 between districts, according to city data.

The grocery-cart markers in the map below are the locations of grocery stores in Austin, Texas. What do you notice about how they're distributed on the west and east sides of Interstate 35?



One report on the economics of Austin concluded, “The rich and poor effectively occupy different worlds, even when they live in the same cities and metros.” We will now explore what these different worlds can look like through a survey. Get a notecard from your teacher. You’ll be answering some discussion questions about Rosa Flores and her story.