

Illinois Food Deserts Annual Report



Prepared by:

Data and Surveillance Section

Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Control

Office of Health Promotion

Illinois Department of Public Health

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A previous food desert report was released in November 2020 and relied heavily on the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Desert Locator that used data from 2015. This report features an update using 2019 data. Estimates in the Food Access Research Atlas for 2019 are based on a 2019 list of supermarkets, the 2010 decennial census, and the 2014-18 American Community Survey.

Food desert definition

For the purpose of the Illinois Public Act 100-0493, "food desert" means a location lacking fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, in part due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers' markets, or healthy food providers.

Food desert terminologies defined by the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Low-income tract definition

The USDA defines a low-income tract as an area with either a poverty rate of 20% or more, or a median family income less than 80% of the statewide median family income; or a tract in a metropolitan area with a median family income less than 80% of the surrounding metropolitan area median family income.

Low-income and low-access tract measured at 1 mile and 10 miles definition

According to USDA, a low-income tract with at least 500 people, or 33% of the population, living more than 1 mile (urban areas) or more than 10 miles (rural areas) from the nearest supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store.

Low-income and low-access tract measured at ½ mile and 10 miles definition

According to USDA, a low-income tract with at least 500 people, or 33% of the population, living more than ½ mile (urban areas) or more than 10 miles (rural areas) from the nearest supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store.

Low-income and low-access tract measured at 1 and 20 miles definition

According to USDA, a low-income tract with at least 500 people, or 33% of the population, living more than 1 mile (urban areas) or more than 20 miles (rural areas) from the nearest supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store.

Low-income and low-access tract using vehicle access and at 20 miles definition

A low-income tract in which at least one of the following is true: at least 100 households are located more than ½ mile from the nearest supermarket and have no vehicle access; or at least 500 people, or 33% of the population, live more than 20 miles from the nearest supermarket, regardless of vehicle availability.

No vehicle, low access, number of housing units at 10 miles definition

Number of housing units located more than 10 miles from the nearest supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store without access to a vehicle.

Observations

There has been an increase in tracts meeting the food desert definition in the four measures included in this report from 2015 to 2019.

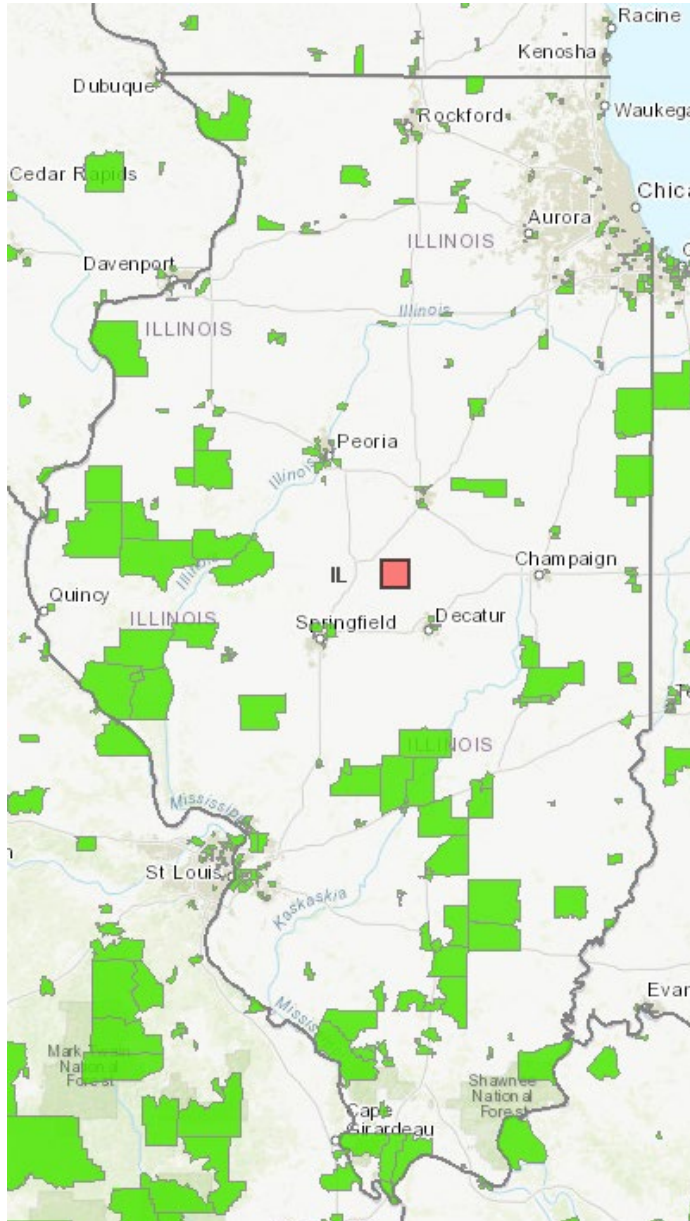
Measures Assessed

- Low income and low access tract measured at **1** mile for urban areas and **10** miles for rural areas
- Low income and low access tract measured at **1/2** mile for urban areas and **10** miles for rural areas
- Low income and low access tract measured at **1** mile for urban areas and **20** miles for rural areas
- Low income and low access tract using vehicle access or low income and low access tract measured at 20 miles

The Maps and data are available here: [USDA ERS - Go to the Atlas](#)

Source: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2011/december/data-feature-mapping-food-deserts-in-the-us/>

Figure 1. Low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is more than 1 mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.



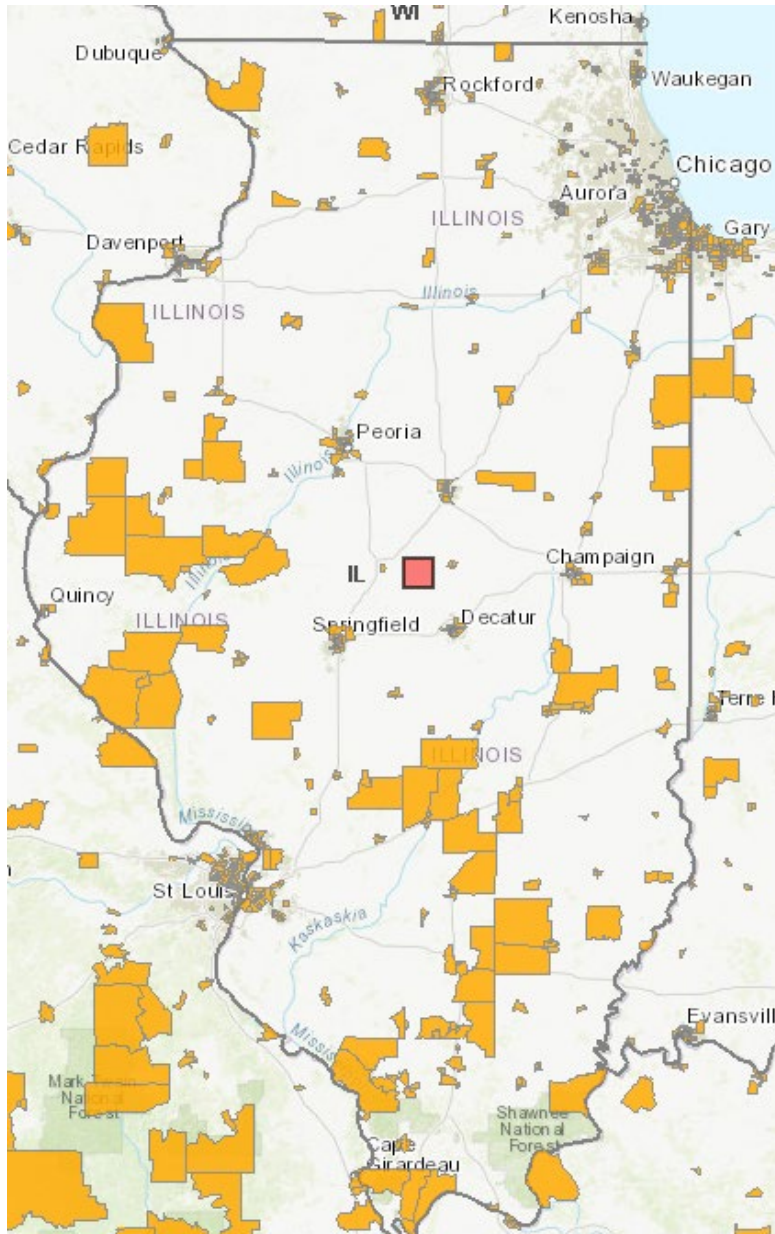
The map on the left depicts 318 Low-income and low access census tracts where urban residents must travel more than a mile and rural residents travel more than 10 miles to the nearest supermarket.

This represents 10.2% of all census tracts and accounts for **1,242,939** Illinois residents living in these food deserts.

The counties with the greatest number of tracts are:

County	# Tract
Cook	51
St. Clair	20
Madison	16
Peoria	16
Will	16
Winnebago	11
Rock Island	10

Figure 2. Low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is more than 1/2 mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.



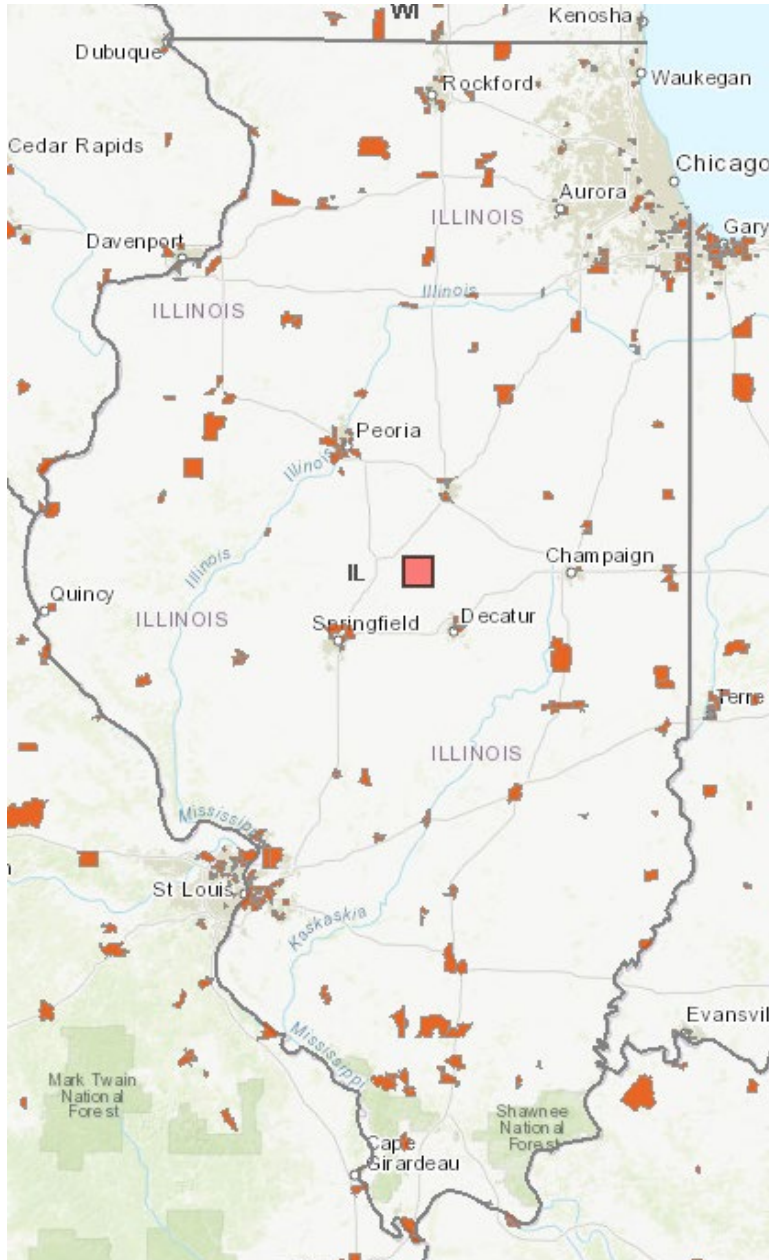
The map on the left depicts 870 low-income and low access census tracts where urban residents must travel more than 1/2 mile and rural residents travel more than 10 miles to the nearest supermarket.

This represents 27.9% of all census tracts and accounts for **3,294,760** Illinois residents living in these food deserts.

The counties with the greatest number of tracts are:

County	# Tract
Cook	302
Winnebago	37
Will	35
Kane	30
St. Clair	27
Lake	26
Madison	25
Peoria	25
Sangamon	24
Rock Island	21

Figure 3. Low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is more than 1 mile (urban) or 20 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.



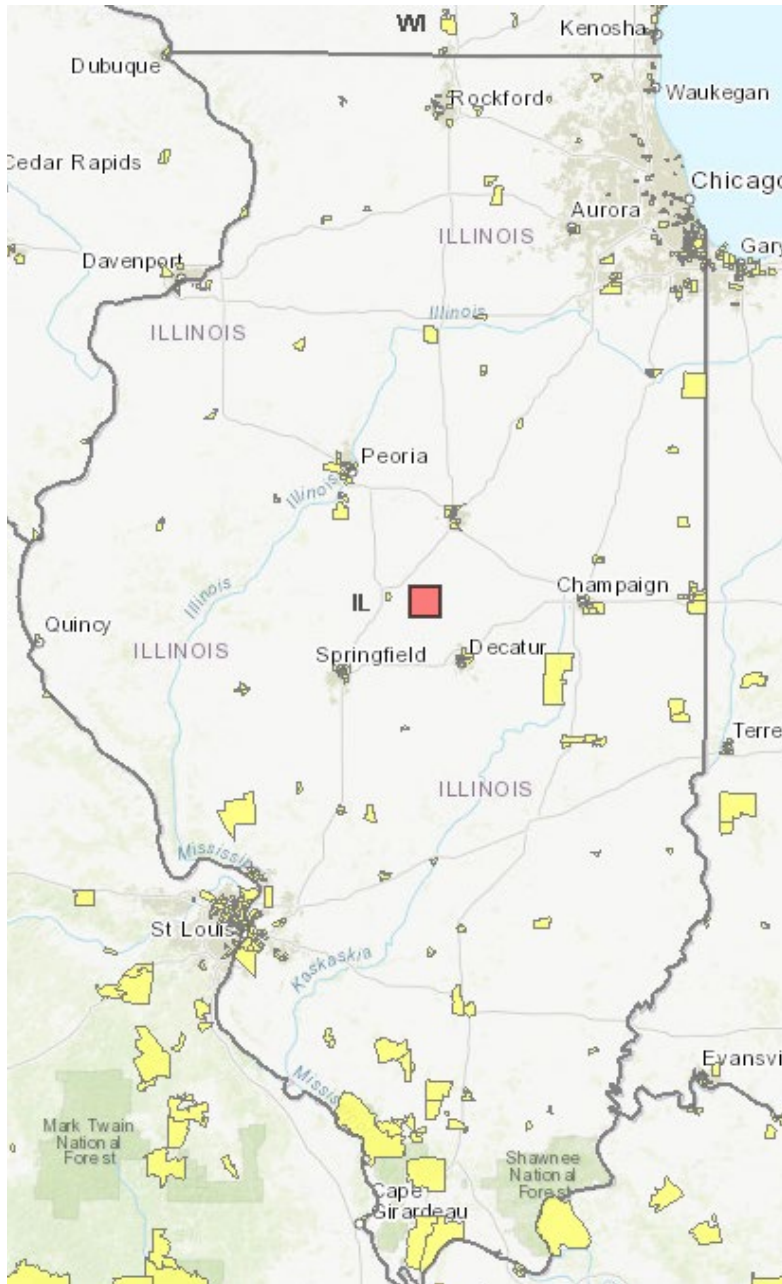
The map on the left depicts 281 low-income census tracts where urban resident must travel more than 1 mile and rural residents travel more than 20 miles to the nearest supermarket.

This represents 9.0% of all census tracts and accounts for **1,125,309** Illinois residents living in these food deserts.

The counties with the greatest number of tracts are:

County	# Tract
Cook	51
St. Clair	20
Madison	16
Will	16
Peoria	16
Winnebago	11
Rock Island	10

Figure 4. Low-income census tract where more than 100 housing units do not have a vehicle and are more than ½ mile from the nearest supermarket, or a significant number or share of residents are more than 20 miles from the nearest supermarket



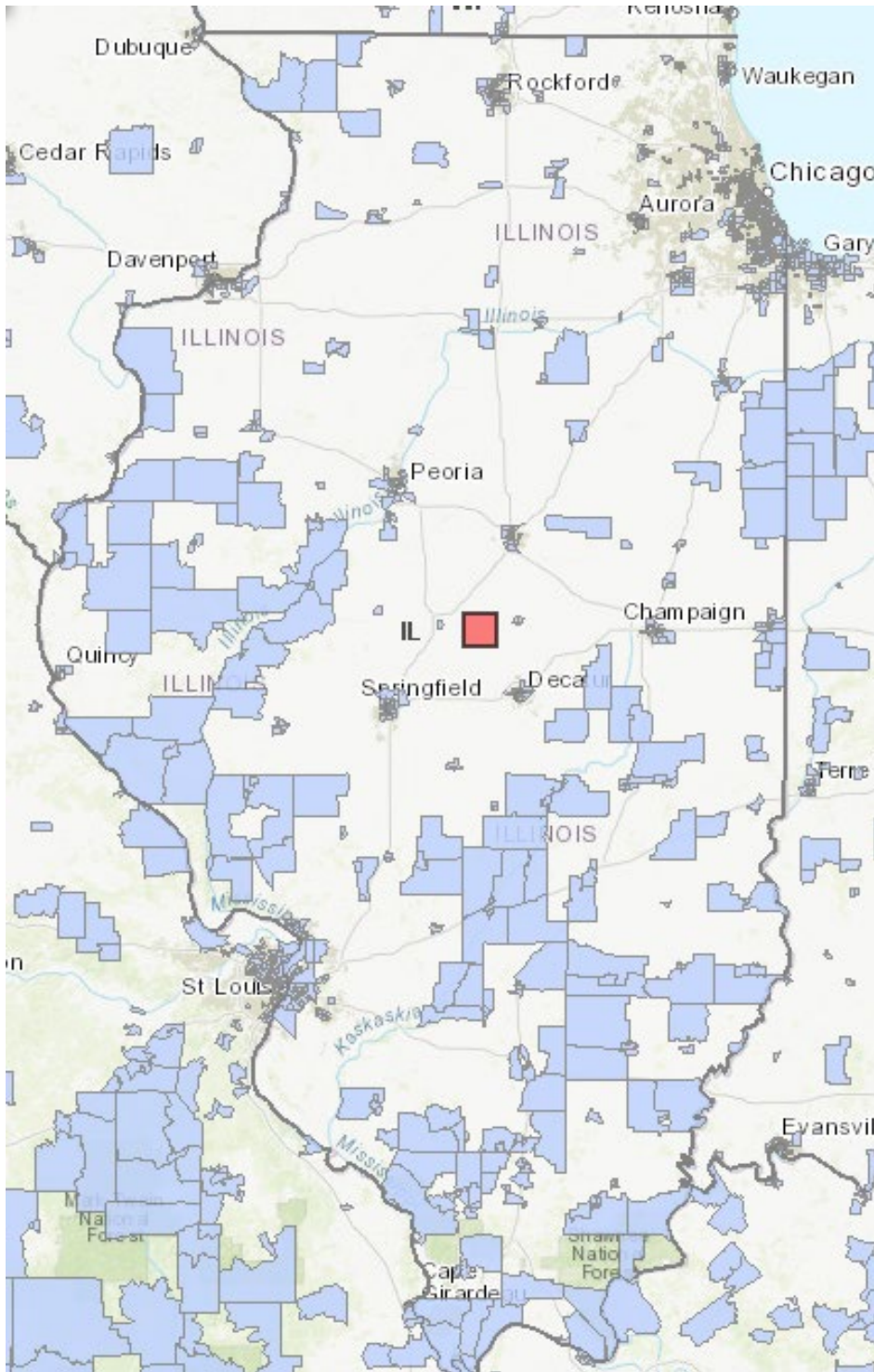
The map on the left depicts 424 low-income census tracts where urban resident need vehicle access.

This represents 13.6% of all census tracts and accounts for **1,641,184** housing units located in these food deserts.

The counties with the greatest number of tracts are:

County	# Tract
Cook	186
St. Clair	19
Madison	18
Peoria	18
Winnebago	12
Sangamon	12
Champaign	11
Macon	10
McLean	10

Figure 5. Low-income census tracts with a poverty rate of 20% or higher, or tracts with a median family income less than 80% of the median family income for Illinois.



The map on the left depicts the share of the Illinois tract population living with income at or below the federal poverty thresholds for family size.

Appendix A. County Census Tract Counts by Food Desert Level

All Counties - Total Income and Low Access Low Tract

All counties	Low income and low access tract measured at 1 mile for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas	Low income and low access tract measured at 1/2 mile for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas	Low income and low access tract measured at 1 mile for urban areas and 20 miles for rural areas	Low income and low access tract using vehicle access or low income and low access tract measured at 20 miles
2015				
Total	268	799	236	373
Percent of all census tracts (n=3,123)	8.9%	25.6%	7.6%	11.9%
2019				
Total	318	870	281	424
Percent of all census tracts (n=3,115)	10.2%	27.9%	9.0%	13.6%

Low income and low access tract measured at x mile for urban areas and y miles for rural areas

County	1 and 10	Half and 10	1 and 20	Vehicle
Adams	1	7	1	2
Alexander	3	3	2	1
Bond	1	1	1	1
Boone	2	3	2	2
Brown	0	0	0	0
Bureau	1	1	1	0
Calhoun	0	0	0	0
Carroll	1	1	1	0
Cass	0	2	0	0
Champaign	3	18	3	11
Christian	0	5	0	1
Clark	1	1	1	0
Clay	0	1	0	1
Clinton	0	0	0	0
Coles	6	9	5	5
Cook	51	331	51	186
Crawford	1	1	1	1
Cumberland	0	0	0	0
De Witt	0	2	0	0
DeKalb	5	7	5	3
Douglas	1	1	1	1
DuPage	0	12	0	2
Edgar	2	2	2	2
Edwards	1	1	0	0

Low income and low access tract measured at **x** mile for urban areas and **y** miles for rural areas

County	1 and 10	Half and 10	1 and 20	Vehicle
Effingham	2	3	1	0
Fayette	5	5	2	1
Ford	1	2	1	0
Franklin	3	6	2	3
Fulton	2	4	0	1
Gallatin	1	1	0	0
Greene	0	1	0	0
Grundy	1	1	1	0
Hamilton	0	1	0	0
Hancock	3	3	1	0
Hardin	0	0	0	0
Henderson	0	0	0	0
Henry	2	3	2	1
Iroquois	3	3	1	1
Jackson	7	9	5	8
Jasper	1	1	1	1
Jefferson	4	5	2	2
Jersey	0	0	0	1
Jo Daviess	1	1	0	0
Johnson	0	0	0	0
Kane	5	30	5	4
Kankakee	5	10	5	7
Kendall	1	1	1	0
Knox	4	7	4	2
Lake	8	26	8	7
La Salle	5	7	5	4
Lawrence	1	2	1	0
Lee	1	1	1	1
Livingston	2	2	2	1
Logan	0	1	0	1
Macon	4	17	4	10
Macoupin	1	4	0	1
Madison	16	25	16	18
Marion	5	6	4	3
Marshall	0	0	0	0
Mason	2	2	1	0
Massac	1	2	1	1
McDonough	5	6	4	2
McHenry	2	4	2	1
McLean	8	16	7	10
Menard	0	0	0	0
Mercer	1	1	0	0
Monroe	0	0	0	0
Montgomery	4	4	3	3

Low income and low access tract measured at x mile for urban areas and y miles for rural areas

County	1 and 10	Half and 10	1a and 20	Vehicle
Morgan	5	5	4	2
Moultrie	0	0	0	0
Ogle	2	2	2	0
Peoria	16	25	16	18
Perry	2	2	2	3
Piatt	0	0	0	0
Pike	4	4	1	0
Pope	0	0	0	0
Pulaski	2	2	0	2
Putnam	0	0	0	0
Randolph	1	1	1	1
Richland	0	2	0	0
Rock Island	10	21	10	8
Saline	3	5	3	2
Sangamon	5	24	5	12
Schuyler	1	2	0	0
Scott	0	0	0	0
Shelby	1	2	0	0
St. Clair	20	27	20	19
Stark	0	0	0	0
Stephenson	0	4	0	2
Tazewell	3	7	3	4
Union	1	2	1	1
Vermilion	6	11	6	9
Wabash	1	2	1	0
Warren	1	2	1	0
Washington	0	0	0	0
Wayne	2	4	0	0
White	0	1	0	1
Whiteside	4	5	4	1
Will	16	35	16	9
Williamson	5	5	5	4
Winnebago	11	37	11	12
Woodford	0	0	0	0

Data source: U. S. Department of Agriculture, Food Access Research Atlas, 2019.