



## **Tulane University Launches Food Store Survey**

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The Prevention Research Center at Tulane University has begun its annual survey of New Orleans' food stores.

This year's data will be used to evaluate adjustments to federal food-assistance programs that encourage women, infants and children to consume healthier foods. The data will also be used with a citywide phone survey as a starting point to evaluate the impact of the city's new Fresh Food Retailer Initiative, a \$14 million local government assistance program for stores that expand their retail offerings to include fresh produce or for new stores that locate in neighborhoods that have historically lacked access to fresh, healthy foods.

"We're looking at the entire food environment to see what foods dominate, in addition to what is lacking," said Dr. Carolyn Johnson, Tulane Prevention Research Center director. "Building more grocery stores may help alleviate New Orleans' food disparities, but there should also be an emphasis on these stores selling fresh, healthy produce."

Past PRC surveys have served as the basis of several studies on access to fresh produce and food stores in neighborhoods throughout the city. One study, published earlier this year, found that existing disparities for African-American neighborhoods worsened after Hurricane Katrina. Although improvements have been made since the storm, by 2009 disparities were no better than pre-storm levels. Another study based on the PRC survey found that African-American neighborhoods had significantly fewer supermarkets and a higher concentration of other food stores that lacked fresh fruits and vegetables.

Founded in 1998, the Prevention Research Center at Tulane University addresses the impact of the physical and social environments on obesity and its behavioral determinants (diet and physical activity) through research, collaboration with community partners and policymakers, and communication to build healthier communities in New Orleans and beyond. The Tulane PRC is one of 37 centers funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For more information, visit [prc.tulane.edu](http://prc.tulane.edu).