

**Toward Food Security:
A Providence Neighborhood Case Study**

by

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ABSTRACT

Unaffordable food and poor consumer food choices are the primary reasons why malnutrition is prevalent among residents of inner-city communities in the United States. This thesis is an investigation of the functions of commercial food purveyors, governmental food assistance and nutrition education programs, and private emergency food providers as they influence people's food options and choices in the South Providence and Elmwood neighborhoods of Providence, Rhode Island. The experiences and opinions of eight mothers are central to this analysis.

To address the problem of malnutrition in inner-city Providence, both short-term and long-term measures must be implemented. In the short term, public programs and private voluntary efforts that provide food to households must be enhanced. In the long term, efforts to reduce inner-city food costs, raise households' income levels, and improve consumers' food choices will facilitate low-income households' and food security.