

## The Food Retail Environment in the South Bronx, 2019 to 2025

The South Bronx, rich in culture and history, has long faced neighborhood disinvestment, structural racism, and limited economic opportunity. These factors have shaped the health of Bronx residents, where 95% identify as Black and/or Latino.<sup>1</sup> Historical practices like redlining, along with the construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway compounded poverty and other inequities.<sup>2</sup> In many parts of the South Bronx, half of households are enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), over a third live below the federal poverty line, more than half are rent burdened, and only 50% of residents ages 16 and older are employed.<sup>1</sup> These economic hardships are reflected in population health indicators: the Bronx has the lowest life expectancy of all New York City (NYC) boroughs.<sup>3</sup> Limited access to healthy food, exacerbated by economic challenges, contributes to high rates of diabetes and obesity in the Bronx.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

A 2012 study in Crotona-Tremont examined key aspects of the local food environment, including food retail distribution, access to healthier items, and food and beverage advertising.<sup>4</sup> This data brief expands on that work in two parts: the first covers four ZIP codes (10451, 10452, 10453, 10454) – with data collected from 2019 to 2024. It adds new data on availability, while continuing to monitor SNAP and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) acceptance, product placement, and promotion. The second part examines the current state of the food environment in 2025, focusing on affordability and food pricing in 10 of the 11 ZIP codes in the South Bronx.

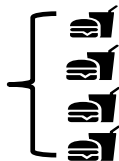
Data were collected through Shop Healthy Food Environment Audits and Retail Assessments. This brief highlights the South Bronx food environment.

### Ratio of supermarkets to fast food restaurants and bodegas in the South Bronx,<sup>^</sup> New York City, 2019-2024

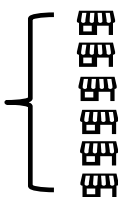
For every one supermarket in the South Bronx, there are...



...four fast food restaurants...



...and six Bodegas.



#### Definitions:

**Food Establishments** include both food service establishments and retailers.

#### Types of Food Service Establishments:

**Limited Service/ Fast food restaurants** serve prepared foods and do not offer table service.

**Food carts** are mobile street carts selling prepared foods.

**Full-service restaurants** serve prepared foods and have table service with menus.

#### Types of Food Retailers:

**Bodegas (or corner stores)** are small convenience stores that have no more than two cash registers and sell a variety of mostly non-perishable grocery items.

**Green Carts** can be a mobile food vending cart or vehicle (truck). Green Cart vendors can sell bottled water, whole, sliced and cut fruits and vegetables, and single-ingredient nuts from a cart or truck.

**Fruit and vegetable stores** sell primarily fresh produce.

**Specialty groceries** specialize in one product area, and include bakeries, butcher shops, etc.

**Supermarkets/large grocery** are large chain or independent stores carrying a wide selection of fresh produce and other grocery items.

**Variety and other stores:** Retailers like dollar stores, pharmacies, and gas stations that sell limited food items, often with few healthy or fresh options.

**Background on the South Bronx:** The South Bronx, located in New York City, consists of several neighborhoods and ZIP codes, including 10451, 10452, 10453, 10454, 10455, 10456, 10457, 10458, 10459, 10460, and 10474. The area has a population of 654,414, with 65% of residents identifying as Latino. Additionally, 35% of the population lives below the federal poverty level (US Census), highlighting the economic challenges faced by the community.<sup>1</sup>

**Shop Healthy:** The Health Department’s Center for Health Equity’s Shop Healthy NYC program works to improve the food retail environment in neighborhoods throughout NYC. For more information on the Health Department’s work with food retailers, visit [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health) and search [Shop Healthy](#).

#### The Shop Healthy Food Environment Audit (2019-2025)

Conducted on target ZIP codes to assess the density of all food establishments including retail, non-retail, agricultural, and emergency food sites within selected areas and evaluate neighborhood access to healthy food, including by store types, locations, and operation status.

#### The Shop Healthy Retail Assessment (2019-2025)

Conducted on each of the food retail stores identified during the retail audit to evaluate food availability, pricing, quality, promotion, and placement.

This brief offers a snapshot of the South Bronx food environment, not an evaluation of Shop Healthy NYC.

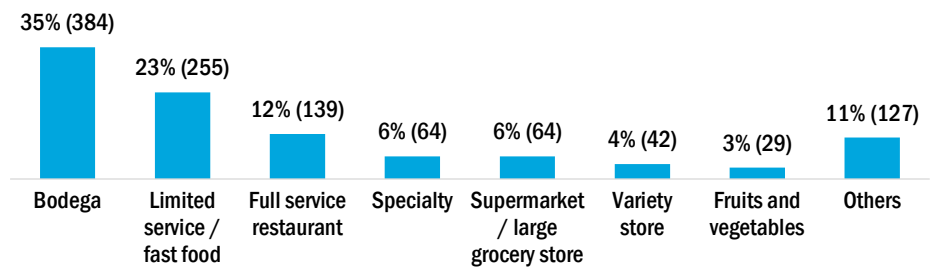
<sup>^</sup>ZIP codes, including 10451, 10452, 10453, 10454

Source: South Bronx Food Environment Audit, 2019/20 - 2023/24

## Distribution of food establishments in the South Bronx

- Between 2019 and 2024, Shop Healthy NYC identified 1,102 food establishments. Bodegas made up the largest share (35%, N=384), followed by fast food restaurants (23%, N=255) and supermarkets (6%, N=64).

**Distribution of food establishments in the South Bronx,<sup>^</sup> New York City, 2019-2024**  
Percentage (and count) of food establishments



N=1,102 food establishments; <sup>^</sup>ZIP codes, including 10451, 10452, 10453, 10454  
Source: Shop Healthy Food Environment Audits, 2019/20 - 2023/24

- Limited service and fast-food restaurants represented 23% (N=255) of all establishments identified.
- Fresh produce stores made up just 3% (N=29) of establishments, highlighting major gaps in healthy food access.
- There was one supermarket for every six bodegas and four fast food restaurants; in the 2012 Crotona–Tremont study, the ratio was one supermarket to ten bodegas.

## Availability of healthy foods in supermarkets and bodegas

- Between 2019 and 2024, while most bodegas sold fresh produce (68%), 32% lacked fresh vegetables (excluding onions and potatoes) and 13% lacked fruit. In contrast, nearly all supermarkets offered fruit (98%) and vegetables (100%).
- Of bodegas and supermarkets with delis present (168 bodegas, 20 supermarkets), only 3% of bodegas and 5% of supermarkets listed healthy options like sandwiches on whole wheat bread or meals with fruit or water. Prepared healthy foods were limited in both store types.
- Bodegas typically stocked many packaged snacks, but healthier alternatives were less common: 37% had unsweetened nuts or dried fruit, 20% had baked chips, and 15% had granola bars that met the [NYC food standards](#). Supermarkets had greater healthy snack availability and carried many of the same types of healthier snacks as bodegas, but in higher volume.
- Less than half (44%) of bodegas carried low-sodium canned goods, whole wheat bread, or low-fat milk. All supermarkets offered them, with 82% carrying low-sodium canned goods.

**Definitions: Produce** – fresh fruits and vegetables (excludes onions, potatoes, lemons, limes, herbs, and canned, frozen, or dried fruits and vegetables).

**Whole wheat bread** – At least 2 grams of fiber per slice and whole grain listed as the first ingredient.

**Healthier foods** comply with the [NYC Food Standards](#) and are in a grab-and-go, snack-sized package; excludes items such as boxes containing multiple granola bars and large bags of chips.

**Unhealthy foods** exceed the Vending Food Standards for healthier snacks, such as those high in added sugars, sodium, saturated fat, or calories.

**Low sodium canned goods** – 480 mg of sodium or less per serving for soup, 290 mg of sodium or less per serving for beans and vegetables, AND front label indicates that the product is low in sodium.

**Sugary drinks** have added caloric sweetener and more than 25 calories per 8-ounce serving.

**Low-calorie drinks** have 25 calories or fewer per 8 oz.

**Excluded advertisements:** those that were incorporated into the product display (e.g., branded refrigerators, advertisements on awnings, etc.) and advertisements for multiple products (e.g., advertisements for sugary and low-calorie drinks together) were excluded.

## Limitations in nutrition support

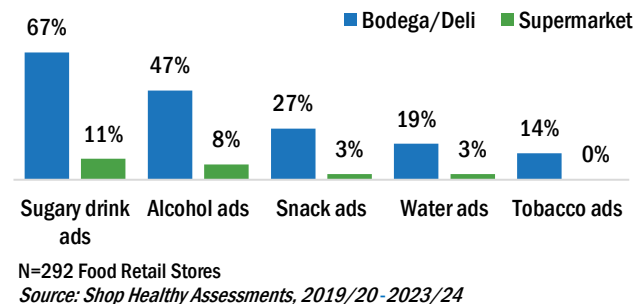
- The SNAP and WIC programs support low-income families in accessing food. In 2019-2024, 84% of bodegas accepted SNAP, but only 8% accepted WIC. In contrast, nearly all supermarkets accepted both. The disparity in WIC acceptance, marked by a low percentage of participating bodegas, limits where families can use their benefits, reinforcing inequities in access to food purchasing options across neighborhoods.

**Data Sources:** [Shop Healthy Retail Assessments](#) (Program Years 7-12, 2019/20 - 2024/25): 292 food retailers were identified through canvassing selected ZIP codes and using other data sources- NY State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYS Ag and Mkt), DOHMH Restaurant Inspection Records, NYC Parks Green Thumb Urban Garden Program, NYC Food Help Map, and NY State Department of Health Vendor Licensing. In-store assessments captured availability, pricing, quality, placement, and promotion to guide store support. [Shop Healthy Food Audit Assessments](#) (Program Years 7-11, 2019-2024): 1,102 unique food-related sites were identified through canvassing selected ZIP codes, data from NYS Ag and Mkt, and online sources. Audits included retail, non-retail, agricultural, and emergency food sites to support recruitment and partnerships.

### Most frequently advertised products in bodegas and supermarkets

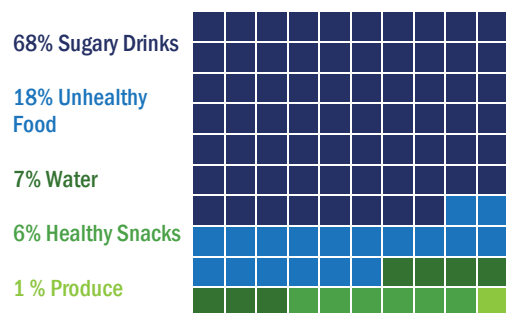
- In 2019-2024, we assessed advertising in 292 stores in the South Bronx, tallying the number of ads for sugary drinks, low-calorie drinks, water, milk, snacks, canned goods, bread, produce, alcohol, and tobacco.
- Sugary drink ads were most prevalent, observed in 239 stores, present in 67% of bodegas compared with only 11% of supermarkets. Alcohol ads were found in 47% of bodegas versus 8% of supermarkets.
- Alcohol and sugary drink ads remained widespread across the Bronx, with only modest drops in 2019-2024, compared with trends observed in the 2012 Crotona-Tremont study.<sup>4</sup> Tobacco ads were less prevalent in the 2019-2024 assessment, compared with the 2012 study.

Top five products advertised by **bodegas** and **supermarkets** in the South Bronx, New York City, 2019–2024  
Top five products advertised by **bodegas** and **supermarkets** in the South Bronx, New York City, 2019–2025



### Food and non-alcoholic beverage ads present in the South Bronx

Ad type and distribution breakdown in the South Bronx, New York City, 2019–2024



N=3,452 advertisements  
Source: Shop Healthy Food Retail Assessments, 2019-2024

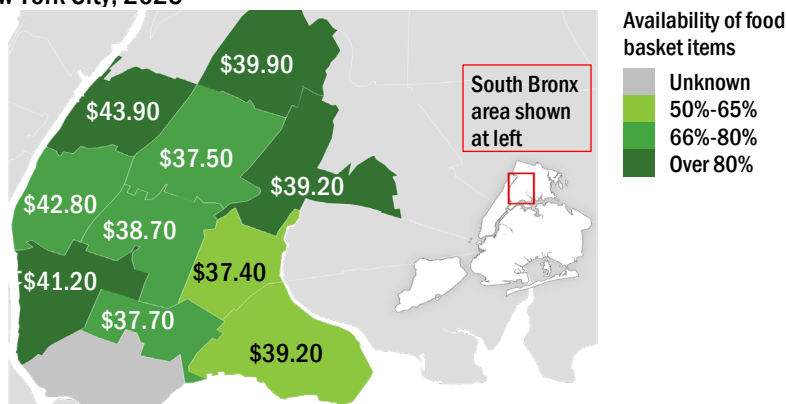
- In 2019-2024, of the 3,452 food and non-alcoholic beverage ads assessed, 68% were for sugary drinks, followed by 18% for unhealthy food items. Ads for water accounted for 7%, healthy non-produce foods 6%, and fresh produce just 1% of the total distribution.
- For every healthy food or beverage ad (water, low-calorie drinks, healthy snacks, whole grains, or produce), there were roughly five unhealthy food or beverage ads (sugary drinks, unhealthy snacks, whole milk, white bread, and standard canned goods that are not “low sodium” or “no added sugar”).
- Our data highlight that predatory marketing of unhealthy items and displays are very common in low-income communities like the South Bronx; other studies support these findings and show that these practices are less common in wealthier areas, exacerbating health inequities.<sup>5</sup>

### Availability and affordability in the South Bronx

- In 2025, the cost of a standard food basket across 10 South Bronx ZIP codes ranged from \$37.40 to \$43.00.
- In 6 out of the 10 South Bronx ZIP codes, less than 80% of food basket items were available, reflecting gaps in access.

A **standard food basket** used by the Shop Healthy program to assess costs includes staples such as eggs, avocados, deli beef, tomatoes, lettuce, bread, oranges, potatoes, water, milk, and bananas. These items commonly align with other food basket studies. Data on costs were collected in stores during the Retail Assessment. Food standard baskets for each ZIP code were calculated by averaging the cost of a standard food basket in all stores assessed in the ZIP code.

Average food basket cost and availability in the South Bronx ZIP Codes,<sup>^</sup> New York City, 2025

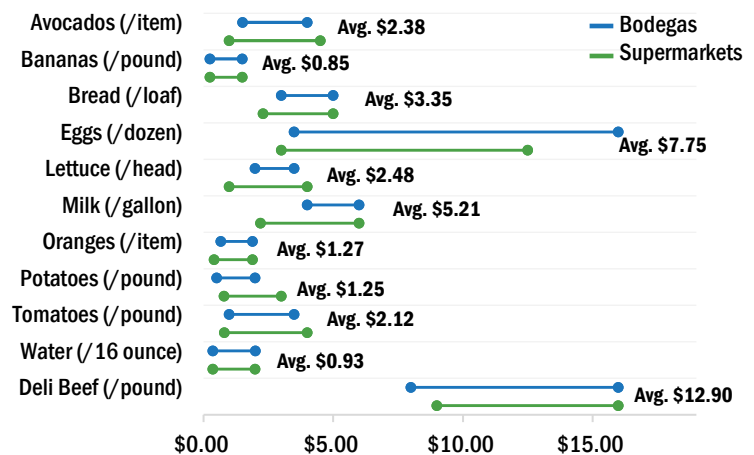


N=113 South Bronx Sustainability Food Retail Stores; <sup>^</sup>ZIP codes 10451, 10452, 10453, 10454, 10455, 10456, 10457, 10458, 10459, 10460, and 10474  
Source: Shop Healthy Food Retail Assessments, 2024-2025

## Price variability and food affordability

- Although bodegas outnumber supermarkets in the South Bronx, the cost of food in supermarkets and bodegas was similar.
- Prices varied substantially across both types of stores regardless of location, with some items more than four times the lowest price. This reflects a challenge in food affordability.
- In 2025, protein staples like eggs (average \$7.75/dozen) and deli beef (average \$12.90/pound) were likely affected by national supply disruptions.
- Produce prices varied sharply: lettuce (\$1 to \$4.99/head), avocados (\$1 to \$5/each), tomatoes (\$0.79 to \$4.99/pound).

### Average and range of food prices in bodegas and supermarkets in the South Bronx, New York City, 2025



N=113 South Bronx Sustainability Food Retail Stores. Green and blue bars represent the range of prices found across supermarkets (green) and bodegas (blue).

Source: Shop Healthy Food Retail Assessments, 2024-2025

## Implications

Persistent barriers to food access in the South Bronx, such as high prices, limited WIC acceptance, and inconsistent availability of healthier items, can be addressed by expanding and scaling existing programs. These services provided by the [Bronx Health Services](#), [Shop Healthy NYC](#), [NYC Green Carts Initiatives](#), [Health Bucks](#), [Groceries to Go](#), [Get the Good Stuff](#), [FRESH](#), More Veggies and similar programs will support local retailers, affordability, and access to healthy food in underserved neighborhoods.

Policies that make healthy food more affordable and accessible in communities with high burden of food insecurity can improve overall health outcomes and access to nutritious options. Strengthening policies to promote and incentivize healthier food retail practices and regulate food marketing are vital to reduce disparities in food environments. Finally, ongoing research and evaluation of food access, led by community input and equity-focused data, is crucial for food security and supporting the health and dignity of all residents.

**Health equity** is attainment of the highest level of health and well-being for all people. Not all New Yorkers have the same opportunities to live a healthy life. Achieving health equity requires focused and ongoing efforts to address historical and contemporary injustices such as discrimination based on social position (e.g., class, immigration status) or social identities (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation). For more information, visit the World Health Organization's [Health Equity](#) webpage.

**Authored by:** Natasha Mills, Ipsita Krishnan, Stephanie Saintilien, and Chantelle Brathwaite

**Acknowledgements:** Gincarlos Andrade, Lorena Santana, Ludmila Pacheco Ramos, Aldo Crossa, Lauren Shiman

**References:** 1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. 2024. Accessed August 25, 2025. [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov)

2. Reimagine the Cross Bronx: Existing conditions summary report. City of New York. August 2024. Accessed August 25, 2025. Available at: [crossbronx.info/sites/default/files/2024-08/existing-conditions-report.pdf](https://crossbronx.info/sites/default/files/2024-08/existing-conditions-report.pdf)

3. Community Health Profiles: Mott Haven and Melrose (201), Hunts Point and Longwood (202), Morrisania and Crotona (203), Highbridge and Concourse (204). New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Accessed August 25, 2025. [nyc.gov/health/profiles](https://nyc.gov/health/profiles)

4. Wong BC, Dannefer R. Describing the food environment in the South Bronx neighborhood of Crotona-Tremont. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Epi Data Brief (44); April 2014.

5. Fraser KT, Ilieva RT, James CJ, et al. Use of Environmental Scan to Assess Density, Content, and Variation of Predatory Food and Beverage Marketing in New York City. *Health Place*. 2022;76:102843.

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# Epi Data Tables

April 2026, No. 158

## The Food Retail Environment in the South Bronx, 2019 to 2025

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### Data Sources

**Shop Healthy Retail Assessments (Program Years 7-11):** 292 food retailers were identified through canvassing selected ZIP codes and using state data. In-store assessments captured availability, pricing, quality, placement, and promotion to guide store support.

**Shop Healthy Food Audit Assessments (Program Years 7-11):** 1,110 food-related sites were identified through canvassing selected ZIP codes, state data, and online sources. Audits included retail, non-retail, agricultural, and emergency food sites to support recruitment and partnerships.

**U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates** are used to describe economic and demographic characteristics of the South Bronx. Accessed August 25, 2025, from [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov)



**Table 1. Characteristics of the retail food environment in the South Bronx, New York City, 2019-2024**Source: *The Shop Healthy Food Environment Audit 2019-2024*

Primary Site Type	Program Year 7, 2019-2020 (N=225)		Program Year 8, 2020-2021 (N=219)		Program Year 9, 2021-2022 (N=230)		Program Year 10, 2022-2023 (N=233)		Program Year 11, 2023-2024 (N=195)		Total (N=1102)	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
<b>Bodega</b>	68	30%	86	39%	82	36%	80	34%	68	35%	384	35%
<b>Limited Service / Fast Food</b>	56	25%	42	19%	63	27%	60	26%	34	17%	255	23%
<b>Full Service Restaurant</b>	39	17%	32	15%	20	9%	10	4%	38	19%	139	12%
<b>Specialty</b>	8	3%	12	5%	12	5%	24	10%	8	4%	64	6%
<b>Supermarket / Large Grocery</b>	9	4%	15	7%	20	9%	14	6%	4	2%	62	6%
<b>Variety Store</b>	8	3%	5	2%	12	5%	12	5%	5	3%	42	4%
<b>Fruits and Vegetables</b>	4	2%	8	4%	3	1%	13	6%	1	1%	29	3%
<b>Others</b>	33	16%	19	9%	18	8%	20	9%	37	19%	127	11%

**Table 2. Economic and demographic characteristics of the South Bronx, New York City, 2019-2023**

Source: American Community Survey, 2019-2023 5-year estimates (U.S. Census Bureau)

Characteristic	South Bronx ZIP Code											Total S. Bronx 7.93%	Total NYC 8,258,035
	10451	10452	10453	10454	10455	10456	10457	10458	10459	10460	10474		
<b>Total Population<sup>1</sup></b>	48,975	76,745	78,270	40,368	42,940	86,958	79,375	78,741	49,753	61,101	11,188	654,414	-
<b>Housing ownership and rent</b>													
% Owner occupied homes <sup>1</sup>	13.6	3.3	4.9	6.4	10.3	6.6	6.2	3.9	11.8	10.7	8.4	7.8	32.5
% Rent burdened <sup>2,3</sup>	48.8	53	53.3	50.7	51	49.3	51.5	52	54.1	53.2	52.5	51.8	52.1
Median house value (dollars) <sup>4</sup>	\$263,500.00	\$263,000.00	\$580,100.00	\$780,800.00	\$348,700.00	\$428,800.00	\$336,900.00	\$515,700.00	\$589,500.00	\$589,300.00	not available	\$469,630.00	-
<b>Socioeconomic characteristics</b>													
% Enrolled in SNAP <sup>5,6</sup>	42.8	49.1	50.3	50.7	50.7	52	49.2	44.7	47.4	52.3	40.7	48.2	39.4
% Households with income <100% FPL <sup>1</sup>	32.1	35.6	33.7	42.8	33	36.8	34.1	29.8	33.5	33.9	31.5	34.3	18.2
% Employed (population 16+) <sup>5</sup>	50.8	50.4	51.2	44.5	47.1	47	51.6	53.8	50.4	50.1	56.8	50.3	53.8
% That didn't complete high school <sup>1</sup>	25.9	28.5	31.1	37.8	30.8	32	29.6	32.3	31.6	29.4	26.6	30.5	15.8
% Not an English speaker <sup>1,7</sup>	24	33.2	33.4	27.1	28.4	27	31.8	35	29.7	28.5	24.9	29.4	23.1
<b>Race/Ethnicity<sup>1</sup></b>													
% American Indian and Alaska Native	0.6	1.0	1.7	2.6	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.7	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.3	0.9
% Asian	1.1	0.9	1.3	0.6	1.5	0.8	0.7	3.8	1.1	1.0	0.4	1.2	15.0
% Black/ Black American	47.7	34.7	32.8	30.1	30.4	47.5	41.7	18.3	34.4	36.4	30.7	35.0	22.0
% Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	0.6	0.0	0.4	1.4	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.4	0.4	0.1
% Some other race	24.9	37.7	36.0	39.6	41.3	26.3	28.2	54.5	39.4	31.2	42.2	36.5	15.9
% White	13.1	11.7	11.3	12.1	8.5	10.2	9.0	11.3	7.9	10.7	6.6	10.2	33.7
% White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino	6.0	2.7	2.0	3.3	1.3	2.8	1.9	7.6	1.2	3.3	1.8	3.1	31.0
% Two or more races	12.0	37.7	16.7	13.6	16.8	13.8	19.1	10.2	15.9	19.5	17.6	17.5	12.5
% Hispanic/ Latino (of any race)	50.8	65.3	67.2	70.2	70.6	52.2	63.2	70.2	66.3	65.4	71.5	64.8	28.4
<b>Health Insurance</b>													
% With no health insurance <sup>5</sup>	9.8	8.2	13.1	9.5	9.8	11	12.8	7.4	6.1	9.5	10.3	9.8	6.7
<b>Neighborhood inequality</b>													
Gini Index <sup>8</sup>	0.5296	0.4971	0.5257	0.6013	0.5197	0.5209	0.5078	0.4913	0.5224	0.5207	0.4867	0.5203	0.5546
<b>Location Median House Value</b>													
US	\$340,200.00												
NY State	\$420,200.00												
Bronx County	\$498,200.00												
Richmond County	\$672,400.00												
Queens County	\$699,200.00												
Kings County	\$880,300.00												
New York County	\$1,010,800.00												

1. From S0501 - Selected Characteristics of the Native and Foreign-Born Populations

2. From DP04 - Selected Housing Characteristics - GRAPI (35% or more)

3. Rent burdened defined as gross rent 35% or more of household income

4. From B25077 - Owner occupied housing units

5. From DP03 - Selected Economic Characteristics

6. Households receiving SNAP in past 12 months

7. Percent reporting they speak English less than "very well"

8. From B19083 - Gini Index of Income Inequality. The Gini index, also known as the Gini coefficient, is a numerical indicator that shows the degree of income or wealth inequality in a given population.

**Table 3. Availability of Healthy Foods in Grocery Stores and Bodegas in the South Bronx, New York City, NY, 2019-2024**Source: *The Shop Healthy Retail Assessment 2019-2024*

Category	Bodega/Deli		Supermarket		Total Count	Total %
	Count of stores with item present (N=225)	% of stores with items present	Count of stores with item present (N=40)	% of stores with items present		
<b>Produce</b>						
Fruits	197	67.5%	39	13.4%	257	88.0%
Vegetables	162	55.5%	40	13.7%	228	78.1%
Packaged ready-to-eat fruits/veg	15	5.1%	19	6.5%	35	12.0%
Produce at checkout	68	23.3%	1	0.3%	70	24.0%
Produce at front entrance	86	29.5%	18	6.2%	110	37.7%
<b>Canned Goods</b>						
Low-sodium canned vegetables	65	22.3%	37	12.7%	107	36.6%
Low-sodium canned beans	73	25.0%	39	13.4%	126	43.2%
Low-sodium canned soup	40	13.7%	27	9.2%	72	24.7%
Canned fruit in 100% juice	137	47.0%	38	13.0%	181	62.0%
<b>Whole Grains</b>						
Whole grains	60	20.5%	18	6.2%	78	26.7%
<b>Low-Fat Milk</b>						
Low-fat milk	91	31.2%	19	6.5%	110	37.7%
<b>Healthy Deli Options (Menu Items)</b>						
Low-sodium meats	44	15.1%	12	4.1%	56	19.2%
Lower-sodium cheese	56	19.2%	15	5.1%	71	24.3%
Low-fat cheese	35	12.0%	9	3.1%	44	15.1%
<b>Healthier Grab-and-Go Snacks</b>						
Nuts and seeds	108	37.0%	19	6.5%	133	45.5%
Dried fruit	92	31.5%	17	5.8%	114	39.0%
Nuts and dried fruit	90	30.8%	18	6.2%	114	39.0%
Granola/Cereal	44	15.1%	15	5.1%	61	20.9%
Chips	59	20.2%	13	4.5%	74	25.3%

**Table 4. Products advertised by bodegas and grocery stores in the South Bronx***Source: Shop Healthy NYC Phase 1 Pre-Assessment (2019-2024)*

<b>Category of Ads</b>	<b>Number of Advertisements in Grocery Stores</b>	<b>Number of Advertisements in Bodegas</b>	<b>Number of Advertisements in Other Store Types</b>	<b>Total Number of Advertisements</b>
Sugary drinks	110	1,633	25	1,768
Alcohol	29	698	20	747
Tobacco	37	1	0	38
Low calorie drinks	19	51	6	76
Regular Groceries and Snacks	41	427	3	471
Healthier Foods	66	109	0	175
Water	149	32	4	185
<b>Total</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>2,951</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>3,460</b>