ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to evaluate the characteristics and GIS methods used to determine an urban food desert. This is done by replicating methods used in major studies around the country, such as the food study report done in Chicago, *Good Food: Examining the Impact of Food Deserts on Public Health in Chicago* (Gallagher, 2006) and a study done close to home, *Cuyahoga County Assessment: Access to Supermarkets* (Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition, 2011). The focus area for this research is Cuyahoga County in Ohio. We compared the results from two scenarios based on different methods for calculating distances: Straight-line and network distance. When completing these two methods, network analysis showed 34 more census tracts that were deemed food deserts. In addition, food sources were added for further analysis that includes food pantries, farmers markets, and community gardens. In doing this analysis, 94 more census tracts had some kind of food relief. The intention of this research is to implement an improved methodology for determining a food desert and exhibit the value of additional data sources. This should produce a universal GIS method and criteria for profiling a food desert in an urban setting across the United States.