

Produce Prescriptions in Cuyahoga County

Assessing the Current PRx Landscape

August 2025

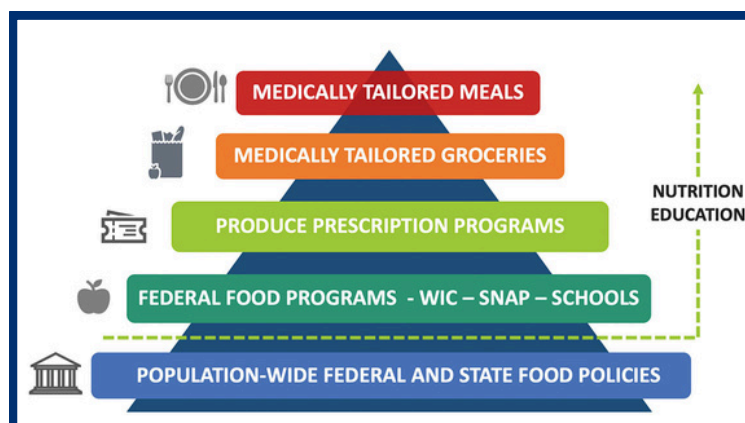
What are Produce Prescriptions?

Produce Prescriptions (PRx) is a **'food is medicine'** strategy where a healthcare provider prescribes fruits and vegetables to patients using a zero or reduced cost payment model.¹

What is the impact of PRx?^{2, 3}

- ↑ Fruit and vegetable intake
- ↑ Food security
- ↑ Health status for adults and children
- ↑ Clinically relevant improvements in A1C, blood pressure, and BMI for adults.

Food is Medicine Framework



Source: American College of Cardiology⁴

Landscape Assessment Methodology

What was the goal? Learn from PRx stakeholders about best practices to tailor programs locally to meet the needs and interests of populations at highest risk or burden of chronic disease.

Who participated? 16 people: 5 local food leaders (e.g., nutrition educators, farmers, and chefs) and 11 PRx implementers (hospital-based and community-based) in Ohio.

When were the data collected? November 2024 - January 2025

Current PRx Trends in the Region

50% of programs surveyed partner with Black and Hispanic food leaders to culturally tailor their programming.

70% of programs surveyed offer additional services (e.g., education, deliveries, and equipment for food preparation).

On average, PRx programs in Cuyahoga County serve
82 patients each week.

Most programs (n=8) see patients for
7-12 months
Other PRx programs are 1-6 months.

Current Strategies and Recommendations

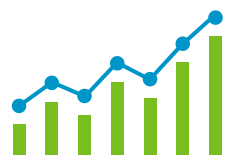
Tailoring PRx Approaches to Increase Impact

Existing Strategies to Culturally Tailor PRx

- Provide different food options and/or recipes that align with the patients' cultures and food preferences.
- Integrate creative nutrition education materials into the program.
- Allow patients to choose the foods they want.
- Gather feedback from patients about the food provided.
- Seek guidance from the Community Advisory Board on the content of pre-packaged food boxes.

“We're able to take culturally-relevant recipes and offer healthy substitutions: how to make vegan greens, vegan cornbread with less sugar. . . Our cooking classes help people make healthy substitutions, but not lose that flavor.”

- Implementer Interview



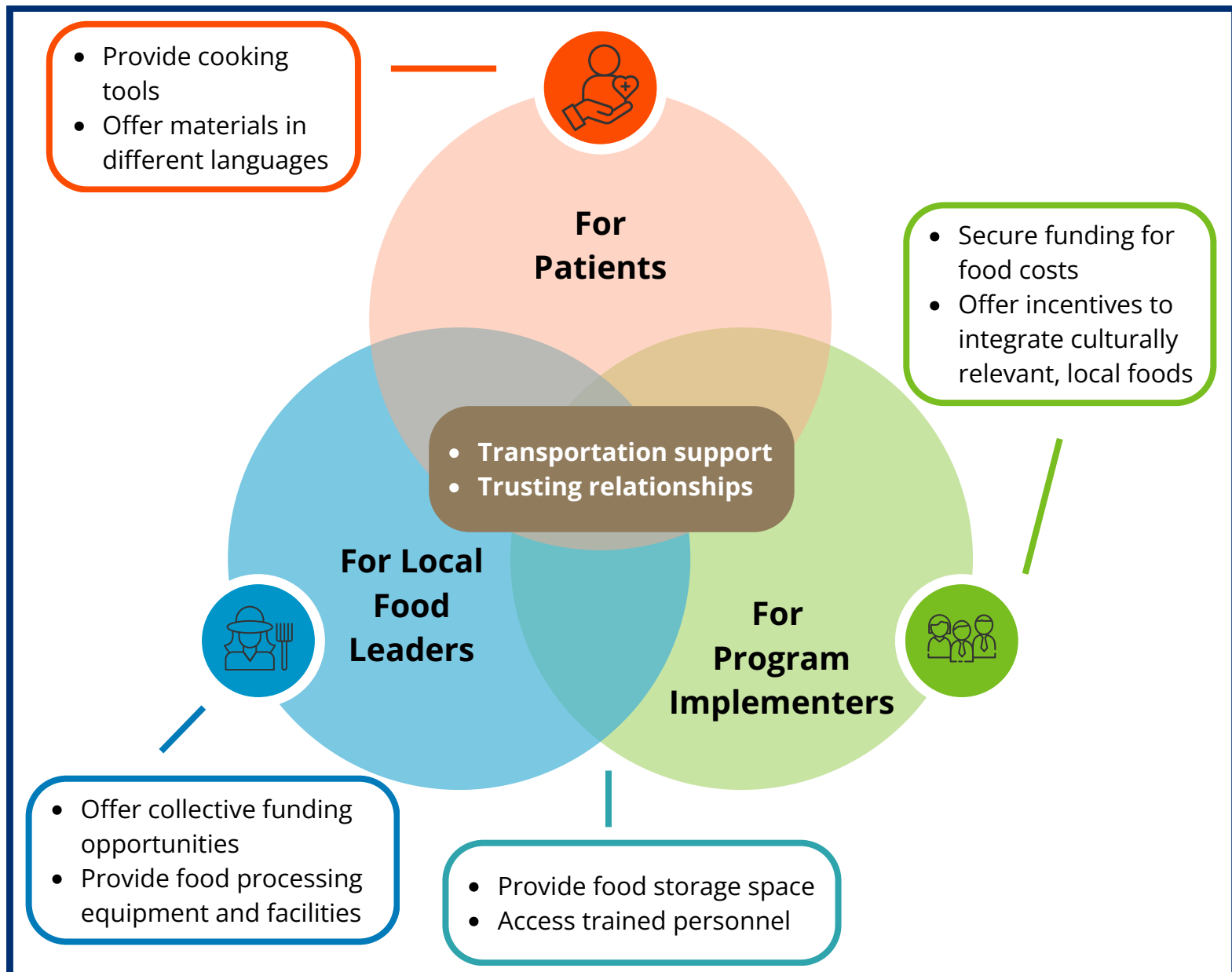
When PRx programs are **more culturally relevant**, there is an **improvement in patient participation** needed for impact.⁵

Recommendations for PRx Programs Based on Stakeholder Feedback

- Invest in efforts to **strengthen relationships** between PRx implementers and local food leaders.
- Engage **community partners** in PRx design.
- Integrate foods from **local farms**.
- **Engage chefs and nutrition educators** who are culturally connected to the patient population.
- Provide **education about and opportunities to apply for funding** that incentivizes and/or subsidizes integration of local, culturally relevant foods into PRx.
- Develop **collective infrastructure** (e.g., shared kitchen, storage, transportation) for local food leaders.
- Grow a **pipeline of culturally connected** nutrition educators and food growers sourcing PRx programs.

What is needed?

Support for Tailoring PRx Approaches for Increased Impact



Please reference the citation below if you use this Data Brief

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Citations

1. CDC Nutrition (2024). Understanding Fruit and Vegetable Programs. www.cdc.gov/nutrition/php/incentives-prescriptions/understanding-programs.
2. Hager, K., Du, M., Li, Z., Mozaffarian, D., Chui, K., Shi, P., Ling, B., Cash, S. B., Foltz, S. C., & Zhang, F. F. (2023). Impact of Produce Prescriptions on Diet, Food Security, and Cardiometabolic Health Outcomes: A Multisite Evaluation of 9 Produce Prescription Programs in the United States. *Circulation. Cardiovascular quality and outcomes*, 16(9), e009520.
3. Mozaffarian, D., Blanck, H. M., Garfield, K. M., Wassung, A., & Petersen, R. (2022). A Food is Medicine approach to achieve nutrition security and improve health. *Nature Medicine*, 28(11), 2238–2240. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-022-02027-3>
4. Food is Medicine Framework. *Cardiology Magazine*. American College of Cardiology. <https://www.acc.org/Latest-in-Cardiology/Articles/2023/11/01/01/42/prioritizing-health-food-is-medicine-a-movement-to-improve-cardiovascular-health>
5. Muleta, H., Fischer, L. K., Chang, M., Kim, N., Leung, C. W., Obudulu, C., & Essel, K. (2024). Pediatric produce prescription initiatives in the US: a scoping review. *Pediatric research*, 95(5), 1193-1206.

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