

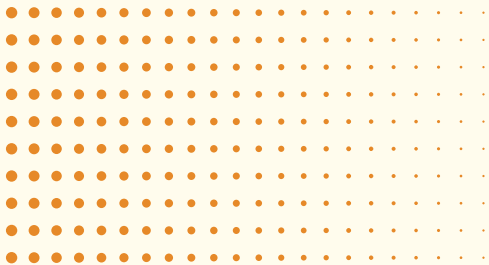


fresh prescription

Recipe for a Healthy Detroit

EVALUATION *Report*

2024 PROGRAM YEAR



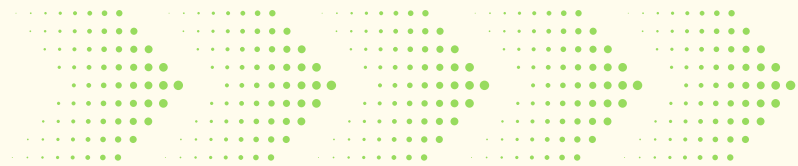
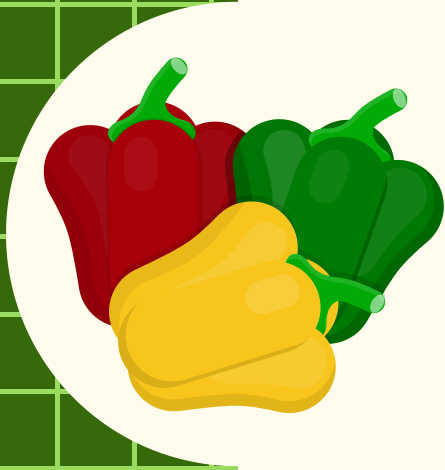
Prepared By :



JFM CONSULTING GROUP

Social Change through Strategy, Planning, Research & Evaluation

TABLE OF *Contents*



Executive Summary	01
Program Overview	02
Evaluation Methods	03
Participant Profile	04
Program Reach	05
Program Impact	06
Opportunities for Improvement	10
Conclusion	12

EXECUTIVE *Summary*



The Detroit Fresh Prescription Network (FreshRx) is a fruit and vegetable prescription program that connects healthcare providers, community partners, and local food systems to increase access to fresh, locally grown produce for Detroit residents. During the 2024 program year, FreshRx served 352 enrolled participants, reaching an estimated 823 individuals when accounting for household members, including 60 seniors and 175 children

JFM Consulting Group partnered with Eastern Market Partnership to evaluate the 2024 FreshRx program using a mixed-methods approach that combined participant surveys, program administrative data, and in-depth participant interviews. Findings demonstrate strong evidence of positive dietary behavior change, increased nutrition knowledge and food preparation skills, and improvements in self-reported health outcomes, particularly related to hypertension and weight management.

Participants overwhelmingly reported increased fruit and vegetable consumption, reduced intake of unhealthy foods and beverages, and high confidence in their ability to sustain healthier behaviors beyond the program period. Qualitative interviews further highlighted the program's role in fostering motivation, confidence, and a sense of dignity and choice in food access. At the same time, findings point to ongoing challenges related to affordability, transportation, and the desire for longer-term or year-round programming.

PROGRAM

Overview

HOW IT WORKS

FreshRx is a six-week nutrition education and produce prescription program that integrates healthcare referrals with food access interventions. Participating healthcare providers identify and refer patients who are managing or at risk for chronic diet-related conditions such as hypertension and diabetes. Participants attend nutrition education sessions and receive \$15 in local produce per session, along with food boxes, vouchers, recipes, and educational resources.

PROGRAM HISTORY

Since launching in 2017, FreshRx has demonstrated success in improving access to healthy food, promoting positive behavior change, and supporting improved health outcomes, including blood pressure and weight management

2024 FRESH RX SITES

- CHASS Center
- Genesis HOPE
- University of Detroit Mercy
- Wayne State University School of Medicine Group
- Henry Ford Health System
- Joy Southfield / Sowing Seeds Growing Futures (SSGF)

EVALUATION

Methods

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative program and survey data with qualitative insights gathered through participant interviews. This approach allowed for synthesis across data sources, providing a more comprehensive understanding of both measurable outcomes and participants' lived experiences, while strengthening the credibility and depth of the evaluation findings.

PARTICIPANT PRE/POST SURVEYS

Surveys were administered at enrollment or during the first program session and again following the final session to assess changes in dietary behaviors, knowledge, and self-reported outcomes over the course of the program.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

In-depth interviews were conducted in Spring 2025 with four program participants to capture qualitative insights into participant experiences, perceived impacts, and factors influencing behavior change.

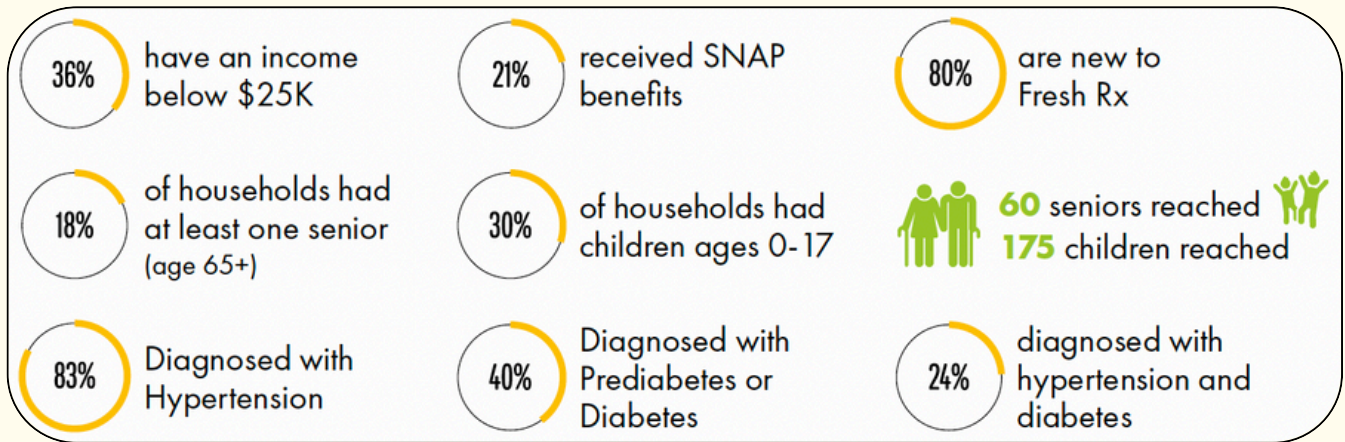
PARTICIPANT DATA

De-identified participant data, including program participation information and limited health-related indicators such as diagnoses and select biometrics, were analyzed to contextualize outcomes and understand participant needs.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

Administrative data were extracted from the Epic system to document program operations, including referral activity, produce orders, voucher distribution, and overall program spending.

Participant PROFILE



WHO THE FRESH RX NETWORK SERVES

In 2024, the FreshRx program continued its focus on supporting individuals and families who face greater challenges accessing healthy food and managing chronic health conditions. More than one-third of participants (36%) reported household incomes below \$25,000, and 21% were receiving SNAP benefits, highlighting the financial barriers many participants experience. Most participants (80%) were new to FreshRx, showing strong interest from people seeking support for the first time. Health information also shows why this program matters: 83% of participants were living with high blood pressure, 40% had prediabetes or diabetes, and nearly one-quarter (24%) were managing both conditions. Together, these characteristics reflect the important role FreshRx plays in helping community members build healthier habits and better manage their health.

PROGRAM

Reach



19,370 spent on Fresh Produce for Fresh Rx participants & Families



498 Vouchers Provided



881 Boxes of Produce Delivered

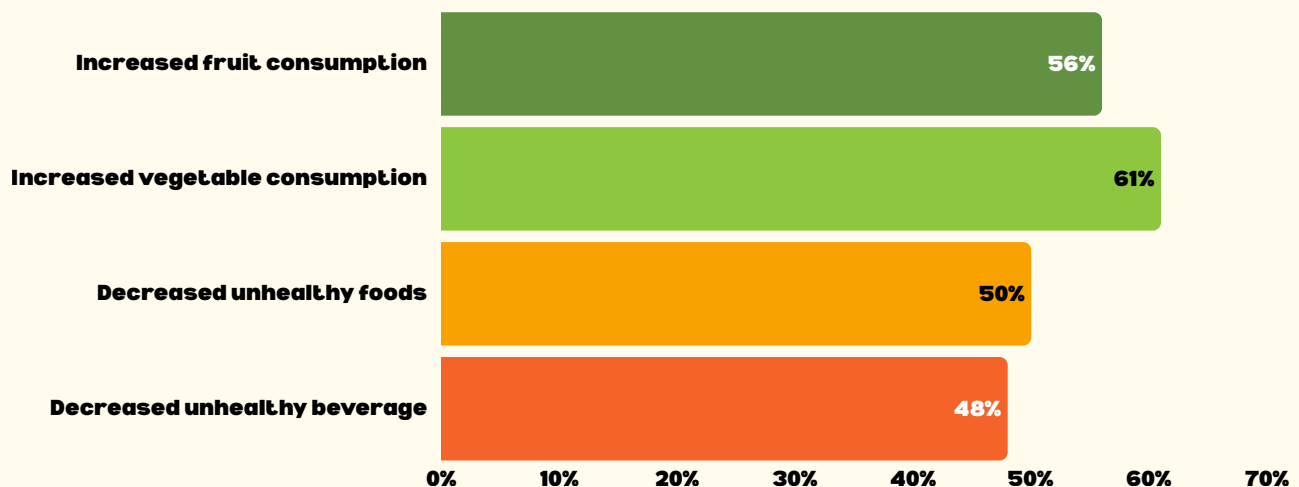
ADMINISTRATIVE OUTCOMES

During the 2024 program year, FreshRx delivered substantial food access support to participating households through a combination of food boxes and produce vouchers. A total of 881 food boxes were distributed, representing an investment of \$13,215 in fresh produce and \$22,685.75 in total program costs, including associated fees. In addition, 498 produce vouchers were issued to participants, with \$7,470 loaded onto vouchers and \$6,155.80 redeemed at participating locations. Together, these outputs reflect strong program utilization and demonstrate FreshRx's ability to translate funding and partnerships into direct, tangible food access for participants.

PROGRAM *Impact*

BEHAVIOR CHANGES

Following participation in the FreshRx program, many participants reported meaningful improvements in their eating habits. More than half of participants (56%) increased their fruit consumption, while 61% reported eating more vegetables. At the same time, participants reported reducing less healthy choices, with 50% decreasing their consumption of unhealthy foods and 48% reducing intake of unhealthy beverages. These changes are especially significant given that, at the start of the program, 80% of participants reported consuming fewer than the recommended daily servings of fruit and 82% reported consuming fewer than the recommended servings of vegetables, highlighting the program's effectiveness in supporting healthier dietary behaviors.



KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND CONFIDENCE

Participants demonstrated strong gains in food-related knowledge, skills, and confidence as a result of the FreshRx program. Nearly all participants (99%) reported knowing easy ways to add fruits and vegetables to their daily meals, and 95% indicated that they felt more confident preparing and cooking fresh produce. In addition, 92% reported knowing how to properly store fruits and vegetables so they last longer, helping reduce food waste and stretch household food resources. Importantly, 98% of participants expressed confidence in their ability to maintain healthier eating habits after the program ended, suggesting that FreshRx supports not only short-term behavior change but also long-term sustainability.

99%

Know easy ways to add fruits and vegetables to daily meals

95%

Report improved ability to prepare and cook fresh produce

92%

Know how to store fruits and vegetables to last longer

98%

Believe they can sustain healthy behaviors after the program

"It just made me more aware of the vegetables. So I do now spend more time in that produce section."

-Fresh Rx Participant



PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE& PERSPECTIVES

Participants described FreshRx as a program that helped them become more intentional and thoughtful about their food choices and daily habits. Many shared that they began prioritizing fruits and vegetables during grocery shopping, reduced trips to convenience stores, and explored new stores or markets as a result of the program. Several participants noted that FreshRx encouraged them to slow down, try unfamiliar produce, and approach shopping with curiosity rather than routine. While some participants faced ongoing challenges related to transportation or finances, most reported maintaining healthier eating patterns after the program ended, emphasizing that mindset, motivation, and feeling supported played an important role in sustaining change.

"[I have] lowered my blood pressure and my doctor has taken me off one pill."

-Fresh Rx Participant

"It just made me more aware of the vegetables. So I do now spend more time in that produce section."

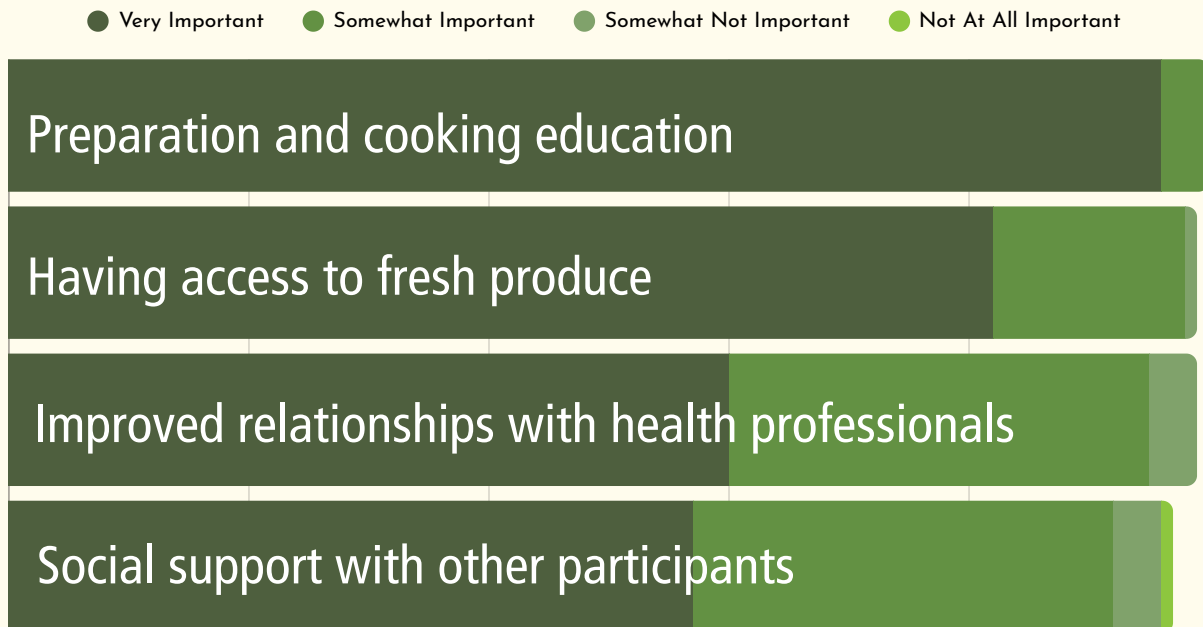
-Fresh Rx Participant



EXPERIENCE & PERSPECTIVES (CONT'D)

Participants also connected their dietary changes through FreshRx to meaningful improvements in their physical and emotional well-being. Interviewees described experiences such as weight loss, lower blood pressure, reduced inflammation, and improved mental outlook, with some noting changes significant enough to affect their medical treatment. Participants credited consistent access to fresh produce, along with recipes, nutrition education, and encouragement from staff, as key factors in helping them work toward their health goals. Overall, participants described FreshRx as a positive and empowering experience, expressing pride in how they used the produce and a strong desire for the program to continue and expand, including suggestions for year-round availability, additional cooking guidance, and broader outreach to reach more community members.

MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM



OPPORTUNITIES *For Improvement*

Findings from participant interviews and program implementation data point to several opportunities to further strengthen FreshRx and deepen its impact. A consistent theme raised by participants was the desire for longer-term engagement, including extending the program beyond its current six-week format or exploring options for year-round access. Participants noted that sustained access to fresh produce and ongoing support would make it easier to maintain healthy habits over time, particularly for those managing chronic conditions. This aligns with emerging evidence from the Food Is Medicine field, which shows that programs lasting longer than three months are associated with stronger improvements in diet quality, blood pressure, and food security.

Participants also expressed interest in additional recipes, cooking demonstrations, and hands-on guidance to help them feel more confident preparing unfamiliar produce. While participants valued the nutrition education and recipes already provided, they indicated that expanded cooking support, particularly practical, culturally relevant demonstrations, could further enhance engagement and reduce barriers to using fresh foods at home. Field-wide lessons reinforce this finding, highlighting that nutrition education, cooking classes, and behavioral supports amplify the impact of food access interventions by translating food resources into sustained behavior change.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT (CONT'D)

From an operational perspective, improved tracking and follow-up related to unspent produce vouchers represents an opportunity to strengthen program efficiency and maximize available resources. Enhanced tracking could help identify barriers to voucher use, inform targeted outreach or reminders, and ensure that allocated funds are fully leveraged to support participant needs.



Finally, continued investment in partnerships with community-based organizations and federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) remains a key opportunity for growth. The 2024 experience, combined with broader Food Is Medicine lessons, underscores the importance of trusted referral pathways, culturally responsive programming, and flexible delivery models, such as market-based options or home delivery, to meet participants where they are. By building on these strengths, FreshRx is well positioned to expand its reach, improve outcomes, and continue advancing health equity across Detroit communities.

CONCLUSION

The 2024 evaluation findings demonstrate that the Detroit Fresh Prescription Network continues to play a meaningful role in improving access to healthy food, supporting positive dietary behavior change, and strengthening participants' confidence in managing their health. Through a combination of produce access, nutrition education, and trusted community and healthcare partnerships, FreshRx reached individuals and families facing significant economic and health-related barriers and supported measurable improvements in eating habits, knowledge, and well-being. Participant experiences further underscore the program's value as not only a food access intervention, but a source of motivation, dignity, and empowerment. As FreshRx looks ahead, opportunities to extend program duration, enhance cooking support, and build on strong community partnerships offer promising pathways to deepen impact and advance health equity across Detroit communities.