



MONTANA

PRODUCE PRESCRIPTION COLLABORATIVE (MTPRx)



History

In January 2022, CFAC brought together existing grassroots PPR programs in Montana to form a working group focused on cultivating a community of practice and providing a space for existing programs to connect. Initial conversations revealed that there was a high need for incentives and a localized Montana Produce Prescription community. We decided to seek sustainability through developing systems, developing relationships, and seeking collaborative funding through the USDA's GusNIP PPR grant.

About Us

The Montana Produce Prescription Collaborative (MTPRx) is a statewide network of Montana based Produce Prescription (PPR) programs that aims to increase food security and health across Montana through supporting healthcare providers to prescribe patients with free locally sourced fruits and vegetables. MTPRx currently encompasses eight active programs across 8 Montana counties, reaching over 250 individuals. MTPRx works to seek collaborative funding for PPR program while supporting individual communities and programs. Identifying best practices to build sustainability across the network is the goal of the program.

Evaluation

Montana State University Extension leads evaluation efforts for the GusNIP PPR project and MTPRx programs through studying participant health markers and food insecurity levels to evaluate how each PPR model effects participant health outcomes and food insecurity levels. Our goal is to understand the health and behavior impacts of PPR programs within Montana communities to inform the direction of PPR programming looking forward.

Case Studies

The following case studies highlight individual MTPRx programs and offer insight into current program models, reach, and approach.

MTPRx Programs

2022-2024

- Bozeman Health (2023)
- Dillon Food Rx
- FAST Blackfeet Food Pharmacy
- Land to Hand Food Rx
- Libby Food Rx
- PHC Refugee Program
- St. Patricks Prescription Produce
- St. Peters Food Rx Program



Visit cfacmontana.org or reach out to bridget@cfacmontana.org for more information



FAST Blackfeet Food Pharmacy



Program History and Approach

FAST (Food Access and Sustainability Team) is a community non-profit on the Blackfeet reservation committed to bringing healthy food access and nutrition education to the Blackfeet Nation. In 2020, FAST partnered with the Tribal Health Clinic, the Southern Piegan Health Center, to form their Food Pharmacy program. This program provides participants with weekly vouchers to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables at these retail stores on the Blackfeet reservation: Glacier Family Foods, Teeple's IGA, Glacier Park Trading Company, Glendale Colony Produce Stand, Suzie's Store, St Mary Grocery. Participants are also given vouchers to purchase ground buffalo meat from the Blackfeet Tribal buffalo herd.

Participants are required to participate in nutrition education activities in the Blackfeet community to remain eligible for the program. These include individual nutrition counseling with FAST's dietitian, group cooking classes that incorporate Indigenous nutrition practices, and attendance to SNAP-Ed classes. Participants also can visit FAST Blackfeet's *Ō'yó'•p'* (we are eating) Food Pantry to get food recommended for their health condition. Participants take a survey prior to enrollment that reflects their health and food security history, and every 6 months to continue voucher renewal.

Program Snapshot

Location	Browning, MT Blackfeet Reservation
Eligibility	Food insecure participants diagnosed with diet related health conditions on the Blackfeet Nation
Current # participants	40 individuals and their families
Prescription Method	\$80/month of vouchers to spend on fresh produce, and \$30/month for Blackfeet - raised buffalo at participating grocery stores on the Blackfeet reservation
Nutrition Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 Nutrition Counseling with FAST's dietitian • Food demonstrations in the <i>Ō'yó'•p'</i> food pantry • Traditional Cooking classes • Recipe and Nutrition Tip of the Week



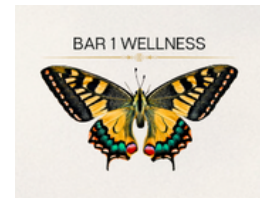
"It is so fun to learn, visit, see what others are doing and share cooking, stories, and tips. It's so beneficial and fun"
-Food Rx participant

Nutrition Education and Program Resources:

Website: fastblackfeet.org
 Insta: [fastblackfeet](https://www.instagram.com/fastblackfeet)
 Facebook: [FAST Blackfeet](https://www.facebook.com/FAST-Blackfeet)



Food Rx Dillon - Bar1Wellness



Program History and Partners

Food Rx Dillon is a produce prescription program based out of Bar1Wellness, a collaborative health consulting clinic operated by Amber Barone. Amber is a Holistic RN and Certified Natural Functional Medicine Practitioner who works to leverage community strengths to improve health outcomes for low income patients struggling with chronic disease management. Her approach encompasses a well-rounded model of health and wellness through increased connectedness to community resources and individualized diet and nutrition support.

Before Food Rx Dillon, Bar1Wellness ran a similar produce prescription in Belgrade Montana. This project connected low-income patients within the community to build a holistic PPR model that incorporated increased healthy food access as well as educational, community based activities.

Food Rx Dillon is the second produce prescription program run by Bar1wellness and launched its first cohort in Spring of 2024. Enrolled participants receive fruit and vegetable vouchers to spend at Town and Country Foods, a local retailer. Participant lab markers are collected pre and post program enrollment. Participants receive nutrition education from Bar1Wellness in the form of hands on experiences that include cooking, exercise, yoga or meditation classes, and are referred to the Beaverhead Community Food Pantry and mindfulness center. This program aims for patients to gain valuable insight on ways to support themselves through diet and lifestyle modifications for life long improved health.

Program Snapshot

Location	Dillon-Beaverhead County
Eligibility	Food insecure, at-risk or diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes or Hypertension
Prescription Method	\$20/month voucher to spend at Grocery Retailer
Current # of participants	24 individuals
Nutrition Education	Holistic, community based model

Food Rx Dillon GOALS:

- Improve access and consumption of whole foods
- Facilitate better understanding of nutrition, diet and lifestyle choices and health
- Increase connection with community resources that reinforce education on key pillars of health
- Use evidenced based holistic health alternatives to support wellness and bridge gaps in conventional healthcare
- Reverse and prevent further chronic disease

Visit Bar1Wellness.com for more information and resources!



Land to Hand Food Rx

Program Snapshot



Land to Hand
MONTANA



Location	Flathead Valley
Eligibility	Food insecure participants diagnosed with diet related health conditions (preference for families)
Prescription Method	Bi-weekly produce share delivery/pick-up (Seasonal option: Weekly stipend to spend at the farmers market)
Current # of participants	55 individuals receiving produce shares 10 individuals receiving FM vouchers 250 people reached total (household)
Nutrition Education	Weekly recipes, cooking and storage tips

Nutrition Education and Program Resources:

Website: LandtoHandmt.org

Insta: [landtohandmontana](https://www.instagram.com/landtohandmontana)

Facebook: [Land To Hand MT](https://www.facebook.com/LandToHandMT)

Program History and Approach

Land to Hand (L2H) is a community non-profit committed to building a strong community food system that fosters socially just ways of accessing food in the Flathead Valley. In 2018, the Food Rx program began as a partnership with the North Valley Hospital (now Logan Health Whitefish) and the local farmers market. In 2020, L2H expanded the program to include eight Logan Health clinics. Working with the Western Montana Growers Coop, participants could receive a year-round CSA share, or seasonal farmers market fruit and veggie vouchers. As the program has grown, Food Rx now contracts with Wicked Good Produce who curates CSA-style bags of regionally sourced fresh fruits and vegetables. Participants receive these produce shares bi-weekly. During the farmers market season, participants have the option to suspend their produce share delivery and visit their local farmers market in Kalispell or Whitefish to shop for their choice of produce with a weekly stipend. This program is designed to be about a year in length: participants complete a survey and the partner clinics capture health metrics at enrollment, around the 6-month mark, and after 1 year to track behavior and health changes.

L2H Land works with Wicked Good Produce to prepare and deliver bi-weekly produce shares and provide participants with a produce guide offering cooking and storage tips and a corresponding recipe. Some examples of these materials are available on their website and social media pages. Increasing healthy food access while incorporating nutrition education and fostering behavior change are central to all of their food access programs. L2H programs also include Farm to School education and the Backpack program in the Columbia Falls School District, and food access programs at the local farmers markets. All L2H programming is designed to ensure everyone in the Flathead Valley has access to fresh and local produce regardless of income.

“The Food Rx program did so many great things for me. I’ve learned about new vegetables, tried them out, and I’ve lost so much weight - over 70 pounds. It really helped me out. And meeting you all at Land to Hand, that was the most rewarding part for me. I can’t wait for next summer!” - Toni, Food Rx participant 2021-2023



Partnership Health Center (PHC) Refugee Program

Program Snapshot

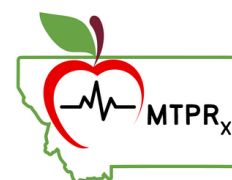
Location	Missoula- Missoula County
Eligibility	Food insecure, at-risk or diagnosed with diet-related health condition
Prescription Method	Monthly gift cards to WINCO, incentive levels based on family size: \$60 (1-3), \$80(4-6), or \$100(7+)
Current # of participants	14 Households (reaches 75 individuals)
Nutrition Education	Nutrition Education handouts and plates from American Diabetes Association



Program History and Approach

The PHC Refugee Program originated in 2023 as a CSA model in partnership with the Western Montana Growers Coop, which reached 22 refugee participants and their families. Participants received weekly CSA shares and nutrition education handouts that were delivered directly to their home. Participants in this first cohort expressed that the CSA's often contained unfamiliar foods and frequent food waste. For the second year of the program, PHC has shifted to program model that partners with a retail store in Missoula; WINCO. Refugee families are faced with the everyday challenges of adapting into a new culture, and this model increases participant purchasing power and allows participants to choose more culturally relevant options.

PHC began its second cohort in April of 2024, where 14 refugees and their families receive monthly gift cards to WINCO. The gift cards are issued based on family size and mailed to participants following their in-person enrollment visit. To ensure the gift cards are spent on eligible items, participants send in pictures of their receipts to the program managers, and then are issued incentives for the next month. In collaboration with the MSU Evaluation team, PHC facilitates a pre and post survey for participants that they take over the phone or in person. To effectively capture participant experience, the surveys have been adapted so participants can use pictures to reflect their evaluation answers and produce purchases. PHC has provided all participants with visuals of portion examples, as well as a physical plate with identified portion sizes to help participants understand how to portion food.



St. Patricks Prescription Produce Program

Program Snapshot

Location	Missoula and Polson, Missoula County
Eligibility	Food insecure participants diagnosed with diet related health conditions
Prescription Method	\$20/week voucher to spend at participating retail stores; Orange Street Food Farm (Missoula), Super One (Polson), and Missoula Farmers Market and Missoula Valley Winter Market
Current # of participants	26
Nutrition Education	1:1 Nutrition Education Diabetes Educator and program coordinator, nutrition and recipe handouts



Missoula Valley Winter Market 2023

Program History and Approach

The St. Patricks Prescription Produce Program originated in 2015 as a partnership between the St. Patrick Endocrinology Center and pop-up farmers markets located inside the hospital, hosted by Garden City Harvest (GCH). Since the onset of the pandemic and shifting the program to better meet the needs of participants, the St. Pats Prescription Produce Program currently partners with local grocery stores, Orange Street Food Farm (Missoula), and Super One (Polson) to provide be eligible participants with fruit and vegetable vouchers. Participants also have the choice to receive vouchers to spend at the Missoula Farmers Markets. Prioritizing local food while meeting participants where they are at is the goal of the program and determined the food retailers to partner with.

Eligible participants are referred into the program from their St. Pat's provider, and during program enrollment meet with the program coordinator to receive nutrition education, complete a program pre-survey, and receive the first month of coupons. Each following month, participants are mailed monthly vouchers and nutrition education materials. There is no program end date, and after 6 months of participating in the program, participants have their health metrics recorded and take a program post-survey.

"This program is a godsend. I wouldn't be able to get fresh vegetables and fruit without it. I've lost weight and feel better."
-Program participant





Program Snapshot

Location	Helena- Lewis and Clark County
Eligibility	Food insecure, at-risk or diagnosed with diet-related health condition
Prescription Method	\$15 Monthly gift cards to WINCO, incentive levels based on family size
Current # of participants	20 individuals
Nutrition Education	1:1 counseling with dietitians, nutrition and recipe handouts mailed monthly

More Nutrition Ed resources at sphealth.org/community-health

Program History and Approach

In 2022 St. Peters Health began a partnership with the Helena Food Share to provide healthy food to participants experiencing food insecurity and managing a diet related chronic illness. With the onset of GusNIP funding and transitioning the program to focus on specifically fruits and vegetables, St. Peter's transitioned their program into a retail model. This program chose to partner with WINCO due to affordability and accessibility of produce for participants. After redeeming the vouchers, participants send in pictures of the receipt to ensure purchases are being made on eligible items, and are then mailed the next month's gift card.

Participant health metrics and surveys are completed at program enrollment, 6 months, and 1 year of being enrolled in the program. During these visits, participants meet individually with RD's and have the opportunity to participate in group nutrition classes at the hospital. Participants are also connected to the Helena Food Share, where they can access more healthy food. As part of the nutrition education component, St. Pete's hosted group cooking classes in the hospital's teaching kitchen where participants could learn alongside other participants and make recipes with dietitians on staff.

The produce prescription program has been a fun way to get more produce into the hands of people, while also encouraging and empowering them to utilize local resources, increase nutrition knowledge, and prepare these foods in a tasty, healthy and inexpensive way.

---Tara Mercer, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist



Libby Food Rx

Program Snapshot

Location	Libby-Lincoln County
Eligibility	Food insecure, at-risk or diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes or Hypertension
Prescription Method	Bi-weekly CSA shares
Current # of participants	11 Participants
Nutrition Education	Participants meet with a Educator and receive nutrition education resources from the Buy-Eat-Live Better curriculum through Montana State University Extension



For additional food safety information, recipes, fact sheets, or to get connected to your local SNAP-Educator, visit

montana.edu/extension/buyeatlivebetter

Program History and Partners

Libby Food Rx launched their pilot program in May 2024 as a partnership between Northwest Community Health Center, Hoot Owl Farms, and MSU Extension's SNAP-Education program. Libby Food Rx is the first program within MTPRx to be initiated in partnership with SNAP-Ed, with nutrition education with local SNAP-Educators being a central component to the program.

This produce prescription program currently reaches 11 participants in Libby, MT, and provides them with bi-weekly local CSA shares from Hoot Owl Farms. Northwest Community Health Center, an income-based medical clinic in Libby, identified eligible participants based on reported food security levels and risk or diagnosis of a diet-related health condition.

Participants pick up their CSA shares at the clinic every other week, where they also have the opportunity to take part in a 6-week nutrition education class hosted by the local SNAP-educator on the same day as CSA pick up.

"Participants are absolutely thrilled with the addition of highquality, fresh vegetables in their diet. Those that attended class remarked what a difference it has made in their lives. Having the classes really helped, as they can get recipe ideas, cooking tips, and encouragement from one another."

Annette Galioto, Lincoln County SNAP-Educator

