

The Instacart Health Policy Agenda

Expanding Access to Nutritious Food for All



Contents

Introduction	3
Instacart Health: Three Areas of Focus	4
Instacart Health Policy Priorities	5
Priority #1: Modernize food assistance programs to increase equitable access to nutritious food	6
Priority #2: Increase the availability of affordable, nutritious food in underserved urban and rural areas	12
Priority #3: Provide equitable access to health-tailored groceries and food prescription programs	18
Conclusion	22
References	23

The Instacart Health Policy Agenda

Expanding Access to Nutritious Food for All

Everyone should have access to healthy, nutritious food—every person, every family, every community. Unfortunately, that's not the case today. 33.8 million people live in households that are food insecure, including 5 million children,¹ and poor nutrition is now a leading cause of illness in the United States.² That's part of the reason 85% of health care spending across the country is on diet-related chronic diseases.³ And these challenges have a far more severe impact on some groups, including Black and Hispanic households, urban and rural communities, and families living below the poverty line.^{4 5}

Instacart's mission is to create a world where everyone has access to the food they love and more time to enjoy it together. By pioneering online grocery with our retail partners, we've not only become a staple in millions of households, we are also playing a major role in the health of families and communities across North America. We've seen first hand that online grocery access can help people adopt healthier eating habits, save time, manage their budgets, and reduce transportation and mobility barriers to nutrition.

Through Instacart Health, we're building upon our longstanding work to end hunger, expand access to healthy food, and improve nutrition and health outcomes by launching new products and partnerships across the Instacart platform and expanding our policy advocacy and research to address these challenges.

This Instacart Health Policy Agenda outlines our top three advocacy priorities and some of the many ways we'll work with policymakers, researchers, nonprofit leaders, private sector partners, and other stakeholders to drive lasting change on these important issues. Together, we can ensure everyone has access to the nutritious food they need to lead healthy lives.

Instacart Health: Three Areas of Focus

Instacart is the leading grocery technology company in North America, and we know that online grocery plays a vital role in helping expand food access and address nutrition insecurity. As a company at the center of millions of people’s relationship with what they eat, we have an opportunity to deliver the ingredients for better health.

That’s what Instacart Health is all about, and we’re focusing our work on three key pillars that connect food, nutrition, and health:

Nutrition Security

More than one in 10 Americans do not have reliable access to nutritious foods.⁶ This is often described as a lack of “food security,” but the biggest issue is often “nutrition security”—making sure people have access to not just any food, but affordable access to the food they need to live healthy lives. We’re committed to leveraging our products, partnerships, and policy advocacy to expand equitable access to healthy food in every community.

Healthy Made Easy

More people are looking for sustainable, personalized nutrition designed just for them. We’re building tools, content, and expert-backed resources to guide and simplify grocery shopping and help people more easily fulfill their personal health needs. With this work, we’re empowering people to make more informed decisions for themselves and their families and helping them find healthy inspiration that meets their needs, tastes, and budgets.

Food as Medicine

We’re giving health care providers and their patients new tools to promote health, because we know food can play a major role in preventative care by helping to keep people healthier and reduce health care costs. Food prescription and nutrition incentive programs, for example, are becoming an increasingly important part of managing health—especially for patients with low incomes, who often struggle to afford specialized diets and fresh food. We’re building new technology that helps organizations scale food prescription and nutrition incentive programs, reach more people, and make it easier for patients to get the nutrition they need.

[Learn more at instacart.com/health](https://www.instacart.com/health)



Our Policy Priorities

Driven by our mission and guided by Instacart Health’s three areas of focus, we are committed to advancing the following policy priorities through Instacart’s products, partnerships, research, and advocacy:

Nutrition Security

Priority #1



Modernize food assistance programs to increase equitable access to nutritious food

Nutrition Security

Priority #2



Increase the availability of affordable, nutritious food in underserved urban and rural areas

Healthy Made Easy & Food as Medicine

Priority #3



Provide equitable access to health-tailored groceries and food prescription programs

Nutrition Security

Priority #1: Modernize food assistance programs to increase equitable access to nutritious food

Government food assistance programs help more than 48 million people across the United States put nutritious food on the table and live healthier lives. These programs also have a cascading economic impact by freeing up financial resources for families with lower incomes that can be used for rent, utilities, and other necessities.⁷

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—a federal program that provides food-purchasing assistance administered by designated state agencies—is particularly important for the nation's most vulnerable populations. More than two-thirds of the 42 million people who receive SNAP benefits are children, seniors, or persons living with disabilities.

In addition, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) serves over [6.7 million women and 1.6 million infants](#)⁸—more than 40% of the nation's infant population. For every \$1 invested in WIC, approximately \$2.48 is saved in medical, educational, and worker productivity costs due to WIC's reduction in preterm births and improved health and development, according to a [UCLA study](#).⁹

A third supplemental income program is the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grant program. This flexible, short-term cash assistance program helps families in need access daily essentials such as diapers, toiletries, and other home goods. TANF assistance is intended to help low-income families with children achieve economic independence.

Challenges and Opportunities

As impactful as these programs are, they need to be modernized to provide efficient, cost-effective support to all eligible participants. Since 2011, for example, WIC participation among eligible families has declined. Only 50% of eligible women and children currently receive WIC benefits. The last significant update to WIC in 2010 (transitioning from paper vouchers to electronic payments) increased program participation by 7.78%.

42 million

people receive SNAP benefits with two-thirds of them children, seniors, or persons living with disabilities.

Some populations served by these programs have trouble using them due to geographic, transportation, or physical mobility challenges. Allowing participants to access programs like SNAP and WIC online and leverage their benefits for delivery would promote equity in food access by allowing more eligible individuals and families to access the support these programs offer.

Recent research has shown that online ordering can have a myriad of benefits for government food assistance program participants. In [a 2021 study in Oklahoma](#),¹⁰ WIC customers participating in an online ordering pilot reported convenience, time savings, and reduced health risks as a result of online ordering. Additionally, the pilot found significantly higher redemption rates for infant formula, fruits and vegetables, and other healthy items—evidence that online ordering helped customers maximize the nutrition benefits of monthly WIC food packages. A [study of a virtual supermarket delivery program](#) in Baltimore City using SNAP payments showed similar results: Nearly half of the participants bought more fruits and vegetables and less snacks and desserts when using the Virtual Supermarket Program.

33.8 million

people in the U.S. are food insecure, and a large majority can access delivery via Instacart.

Instacart’s Commitments

Our work on these challenges to date and our goals and commitments moving forward include:

- **Expand EBT SNAP to all Instacart grocery partners by 2030**
Instacart pioneered the retailer onboarding process for EBT SNAP online ordering with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food & Nutrition Service (FNS), helping SNAP beneficiaries access fresh food and pantry staples from local retailers. Instacart has enabled EBT SNAP online payment nationwide with more than 60 retailers and banners, spanning more than 8,000 stores across 49 states and Washington, D.C.

As part of our ongoing work to provide affordable access to grocery delivery, Instacart will continue its efforts to expand EBT SNAP access by working with FNS and our retail partners to enable more stores to accept EBT SNAP as a payment method. Our goal is to expand EBT SNAP to Instacart retail grocery partners in all 50 states in 2023 and expand to all Instacart grocery partners by 2030.

- **Enhance the in-store shopping experience for EBT SNAP beneficiaries**

Instacart is partnering with retailers to introduce new technologies that improve the in-store experience for EBT SNAP beneficiaries. For example, our recently introduced Carrot Tags—which integrate with electronic, scannable shelf labels—help customers locate items within a store and can inform customers of whether products are SNAP eligible as they shop. In addition, Instacart’s Scan & Pay technology—which lets customers scan products as they shop and pay using their phone—instantly identifies SNAP-eligible items as they’re scanned, making it easier to explore the store and find approved products.

- **Conduct further research on online grocery and food assistance programs**

Instacart will continue to study the impact, opportunities and barriers related to online grocery for food assistance program beneficiaries. In 2022, Instacart partnered with No Kid Hungry and the University of Kentucky to examine the impact of online grocery shopping for SNAP and non-SNAP households in rural and urban areas. The study found that both SNAP and non-SNAP participants who shop online purchase more fruits and vegetables compared to in-store shoppers without increasing their total spend.¹¹

- **Bring TANF online in 2023**

In 2023, Instacart plans to enable retailers to accept EBT Cash, the electronic payment method for TANF benefits, through the Instacart platform. This will allow TANF beneficiaries to use their benefits to purchase household necessities and other daily essentials online as well as pay for delivery and fees, helping them save time, access additional retailers, and manage their budgets, among other benefits. Our goal: Enable TANF benefits to be used on the Instacart platform across all of our grocery partners by 2030.

- **Streamline SNAP, WIC, and TANF enrollment**

Instacart will work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and state agencies that administer EBT SNAP programs to unlock new ways to help potential SNAP, WIC, and TANF beneficiaries learn how to register for these programs.

2023

Our goal is to expand EBT SNAP to Instacart retail grocery partners in all 50 states by 2023.

Specifically, Instacart will facilitate SNAP enrollment among hard-to-reach, currently eligible populations, including older adults (50+), college students, and working people with lower incomes, who research has shown are among the most eligible nonparticipants in the SNAP program. For example, Instacart is already working with the Department of Transitional Assistance in Massachusetts to amplify and support the launch of its common application for MassHealth and SNAP, intended in part to “close the SNAP gap.”

- **Expand Nutrition Access Through Food Stipend Programs**
Instacart will work with public and private organizations to increase nutrition access and incentivize healthy habits by supporting digital food stipend programs that give people funds to buy nutritious food. Digital stipends can be limited to certain food categories, giving people easier access to healthy foods that may otherwise be cost-prohibitive. Instacart will pilot Fresh Funds, a new product that enables organizations such as insurance companies, health systems, corporations, and nonprofits to create a scalable solution to unlock nutrition access for patients and consumers.

Instacart’s Advocacy

To continue to advance this priority, we will work with policymakers and other stakeholders to support public policies that will:

- **Expand online access to SNAP and TANF**
Eliminate the remaining barriers to bringing food assistance programs like SNAP and TANF fully online, which would increase equitable access to nutritious food and daily essentials to more eligible households. This can be accomplished by updating and modernizing existing regulations, securing adequate funding for these programs, ensuring that USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service is sufficiently resourced to meet demand, and enabling online marketplaces to bring SNAP-approved retailers online.

2030

Our goal: Enable TANF and EBT SNAP benefits to be used on the Instacart platform across all of our retail partners by 2030.

- **Extend WIC eligibility**
Modernize and strengthen WIC to make it more accessible, including by (1) extending program eligibility for children from five years to six years; (2) extending postpartum eligibility from six months for non-breastfeeding mothers and one year for breastfeeding mothers to two years for all mothers; and (3) extending the certification period for infants from one year to two years.
- **Bring WIC online**
Remove barriers to bringing WIC online. We will work through regulatory rulemaking processes and direct advocacy with government stakeholders to provide our unique learnings and insights about the complexity of bringing WIC online. We are focused on addressing challenges related to accepting WIC online payments, handling individual and state-level item eligibility requirements, and scaling the program online.
- **Reduce or eliminate sales tax on groceries**
Reduce or eliminate state sales taxes on groceries, diapers, and menstrual products to help bring down the cost of food and supplies that families need most. Today, 10 states impose sales tax on grocery purchases. Another 12 states do not provide any tax exemptions on diaper and menstrual products, while 19 states only provide a partial tax break.

These taxes disproportionately impact low-income and underserved communities, and Instacart supports reducing or eliminating these remaining taxes through legislation or regulatory action. Reducing or eliminating these taxes will increase the power of low-income and underserved communities to purchase household staples and nutritious food.

10 states

currently impose sales tax on grocery purchases.



Nutrition Security

Priority #2: Increase the availability of affordable, nutritious food in underserved urban and rural areas

In both rural and urban areas individuals and families with low incomes often face the greatest challenges maintaining a healthy diet due to insufficient financial resources and insufficient access to affordable grocery options in their communities.

While more people live in urban food deserts than in rural food deserts, a much larger percentage of the individuals living in rural areas are food insecure, according to [USDA data](#).¹² In 2016, 15% of households in rural areas experienced food insecurity compared to 11.8% of households in urban areas,¹³ according to the [Food Research and Action Center](#). Moreover, about [5 million people in rural areas](#)¹⁴ have to travel 10 miles or more to buy groceries, and people of color who live in rural areas are more than twice as likely to experience hunger compared to white individuals living in rural areas.¹⁵

In addition, rates of food insecurity among Black and Hispanic households are at least twice that of non-Hispanic white households¹⁶ — and these gaps have remained as food insecurity spiked across the board during the COVID-19 pandemic: While national food insecurity rates doubled during the pandemic (impacting 23% of households overall), according to researchers from Northwestern University¹⁷, Black and Hispanic households have experienced significantly higher rates of food insecurity (36% and 32%, respectively) compared to white households (18%).

Challenges and Opportunities

The absence of grocery stores within a reasonable travel distance can restrict individual access to healthy food. Sometimes referred to as “food deserts,” these areas are defined by both economic and geographic barriers to fresh food. According to the [USDA](#), 18.8 million people (6.1% of the U.S. population) live in low-income, low-access census tracts where (1) at least 33% of individuals are over a mile from the nearest grocery store in urban locations or over 10 miles from the nearest store in rural locations and (2) the majority of the tract is low income.¹⁸ Food deserts are caused by a complex combination of factors including income

5 million

people in rural areas have to travel 10 miles or more to buy groceries.

inequality, historical racism, neighborhood disinvestment, and transportation challenges.¹⁹

Delivery is particularly important for those who face challenges getting to the grocery store due to a disability, scheduling constraints, or transportation barriers. [A grocery delivery study by the University of Michigan](#)²⁰ interviewed 20 low-income individuals with various transportation barriers (for example: no car access or a disability), and all 20 reported that grocery delivery made nutritious food more accessible and raised their awareness of the availability of healthy foods.

Instacart’s Commitments

Our work on these challenges to date and our commitments moving forward include:

- **Expand grocery delivery to more rural communities**
Instacart will continue to introduce solutions that expand delivery availability to more communities. Today, our platform facilitates same-day, long-distance delivery, helping expand digital food access to a large majority of people who are food insecure across the United States. But we recognize that many still cannot access the benefits of online grocery. We will work with our retail partners to research and test alternative delivery models to enable additional delivery options for people living in low-access areas—especially rural communities.
- **Provide 10 million servings of fruits and vegetables**
Instacart is teaming up with Partnership for a Healthier America to provide 10 million servings of fruits and vegetables by the end of 2025. As part of this commitment, we’re focused on making produce more accessible via Instacart’s platform as well as conducting joint research to better understand how and where we can advance food equity. Aiming to unlock healthy food access for participants with transportation and mobility barriers, PHA will leverage Instacart’s Fresh Funds technology and Instacart will donate Instacart+ memberships, waiving delivery fees for participants.
- **Conduct further research on digital food access gaps**
Instacart will lead and partner on research to better understand the gaps and challenges related to digital food access and food-

10 million

Instacart is teaming up with Partnership for a Healthier America to provide 10 million servings of fruits and vegetables by the end of 2025.

insecure populations, including research into racial disparities in food access. Recently, we participated in [a Brookings Institution study](#) to map the geography of digital food access in the U.S, revealing that 90% of people living in low-income, low-access areas have at least one digital food access option.²¹

However, many neighborhoods that are in delivery zones have low broadband adoption rates due to systemic factors including lack of infrastructure and affordability, the study showed. Instacart will further study the impact of grocery delivery on food deserts, with an emphasis on rural communities.

- **Support food banks and local nonprofits**

Instacart will continue to invest in organizations that help get food to people who need it the most, including but not limited to those in food-insecure urban and rural communities. Instacart is committed to supporting food banks, including through our current multi-year partnership with Feeding America. From food drives, fundraisers, and disaster relief campaigns, to providing ecommerce technology, we support food banks year round to help get food to people who need it the most. To date, Instacart has donated more than 12 million meals to food banks and other local, food-focused nonprofits to help address food and nutrition insecurity in the communities we serve. Some examples of our work in 2022 include:

- Working with DC Central Kitchen on a summer hunger campaign, raising \$50,000 to support food-insecure individuals in the District of Columbia.
- Powering online ordering and fulfillment for Loaves and Fishes food bank in Charlotte, North Carolina to expand access to more nutritious food choices.
- Sponsoring and participating in Food Lifeline's Stamp Out Hunger event in Seattle and Project Bread's Annual Walk for Hunger in Massachusetts.

- **Serve our local communities**

The Instacart team will continue to serve the communities where we live and work. As part of our 2022 Juneteenth Day of Action, 200 employees packed and distributed over 70,000 pounds of



of people living in low-income, low-access areas have at least one digital food access option.

food for 20,000 families. In addition, every time our corporate employees shop grocery batches for customers, all earnings and tips are currently donated to Feeding America, amounting to more than \$120,000 in donations to date.

- **Partner with advocacy leaders to educate policymakers**
Instacart will continue to partner with leading advocacy organizations to educate policymakers about the food access challenges facing communities across the country and help advance important policy solutions. We are proud to be members of the Alliance to End Hunger, and we worked with the group to advocate for the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, signing letters of support, joining the Alliance’s corporate working group to support the conference, and hosting a joint listening session on food insecurity challenges leading up to the event. We will continue to work closely with organizations like the Alliance to End Hunger on joint education and advocacy campaigns to help combat hunger and improve nutrition security.

Instacart’s Advocacy

To continue to advance this priority, we will work with policymakers and other stakeholders to support public policies that will:

- **Expand infrastructure to improve access for food-insecure communities**
Bring brick and mortar grocery stores, reliable internet, and digital access to food-insecure communities. Instacart supports incentives and programs to bring new grocery stores to food-insecure areas and renovate or expand existing grocery stores in those communities.

Instacart also supports improving reliable internet and digital access as a way to help increase access to nutrition education, food assistance programs, and healthy foods. In line with research-based policy recommendations from organizations like the Brookings Institution²² and the No Kid Hungry campaign,²³ Instacart supports investments in programs to improve broadband access and affordability for rural and underserved communities as well as continued efforts to bridge the digital divide by incentivizing public-private partnerships, strengthening federal and state collaboration,

12 million

Instacart has donated more than 12 million meals to food banks and other nonprofits.

providing long-term operational support for rural broadband expansion, and ensuring that federal broadband funding goes to providers who serve rural and underserved communities.

- **Provide sustainable funding for food banks**

Maintain a sustainable funding mechanism for the operations and commodities that food banks need. This includes continued funding of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), which works to improve the health of older adults by distributing food packages to participating states and Indian Tribal Organizations.

- **Provide universal school meal coverage for children**

Support programs and policies providing quality school meals for children. With the sunset of the federally-funded universal school meals program in June 2022, Instacart will advocate for programs and policies that continue providing universal school meal coverage at the state level. Instacart worked with Project Bread, for example, on an advocacy campaign to encourage funding for universal school meals for children in Massachusetts for the 2022-2023 school year and to call on lawmakers to make the program permanent during the next legislative session.

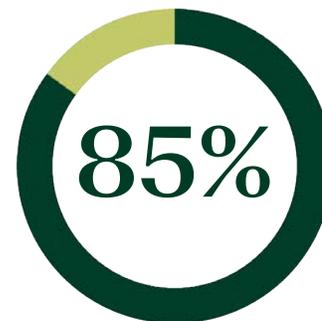
In addition, we will advocate to expand no-charge school breakfast and lunch to all children and provide lower-income families with children an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card to purchase food when schools are closed for five days or more, including during the summer, school breaks, or unanticipated closures. We also support making summer meals programs for kids permanent, as school meals help children access the nutritious food they need to live healthy lives.



Healthy Made Easy & Food as Medicine

Priority #3: Provide equitable access to health-tailored groceries and food prescription programs

Food is a key determinant of health and wellbeing, and today, 85% of health care spending in the United States is connected to diet-related chronic disease.²⁴ Food and nutrition interventions such as medically tailored groceries and food prescriptions represent a “food as medicine” approach to disease prevention, management and treatment. These programs have proven to be helpful to individuals with complex medical conditions, as well as those with more common diet-related chronic and acute conditions.



of health care spending in the United States is connected to diet-related chronic disease.

Challenges and Opportunities

The number one risk factor attributable to death in the U.S. is a diet low in fruits and vegetables and high in processed foods, sodium, or trans fatty acids, which can cause heart disease, according to the [Institute of Health Metrics Evaluation](#). According to the CDC, significant racial disparities exist in mortality associated with diet-related chronic disease due to factors such as environmental exposures, social determinants, and health care access.²⁵ In expectant mothers, poor nutrition contributes to pregnancy-related diabetes, prenatal stress, low birth weight, and an increased risk of birth defects like cleft palate and spina bifida.²⁶

Meanwhile, research has repeatedly shown a connection between medically tailored meals and decreased [hospital admissions](#)²⁷ and [health expenditures](#),²⁸ while produce and food prescription programs have been shown to positively impact health outcomes including [glycemic control](#),²⁹ [HIV, and hypertension](#).³⁰

Instacart’s Commitments

Our work on these challenges to date and our commitments moving forward include:

- **Support food prescriptions and nutrition incentives with Fresh Funds**
Instacart is launching new products focused on food as medicine, including Instacart Fresh Funds, a new category-specific food

stipend. With Fresh Funds, nonprofits and employers, as well as health care payers and providers, can distribute funds to their patients and members to purchase specific food categories—for example, fresh produce—to help incentivize healthy choices. We're proud to be partnering with a range of organizations to launch Fresh Funds, which will provide participants with more choices and promote healthier habits.

- **Facilitate sending groceries to others with Care Carts**

Instacart is launching a new service, Care Carts, that allows health care providers, dietitians and nutritionists, and caregivers to order groceries and medical supplies on behalf of someone else. This could be a hospital care coordinator sending healthy groceries and over the counter medical supplies to a patient at home following hospital discharge, for example, or a dietitian sending personalized groceries to a client through programs funded by health care payers, including Medicare and Medicaid. We're rolling out Care Carts with a variety of organizations, including hospital-at-home solution provider Medically Home, digital nutrition services Season Health, digital nutrition platform Good Measures and Foodsmart, the leading app-based platform that powers the use of food as medicine.

- **Enable shoppable Carts for dietitians**

We're expanding how we use existing Instacart features like shoppable Carts to enable personalized and collaborative nutrition plans that nutritionists and dietitians can offer to their clients. These plans will be instantly shoppable on the Instacart platform, making adopting and sticking to tailored nutrition plans easier than ever. With these new tools, nutritionists and dietitians will be able to empower more people to eat and live healthy.

- **Provide new health information with Health Tags**

Instacart is introducing Health Tags across our platform, helping consumers shop based on relevant product-level characteristics, such as gluten free or vegan products. Customers can view up to 23 item-level health or nutrition tags across more than 500,000 items while they shop. These new tags will be viewable on individual items while browsing or searching the platform, as well as on a page that displays all items with those attributes, helping

**500,000
items**

With Instacart's new health tags, customers can view up to 23 health or nutrition tags across more than 500,000 items while they shop.

individuals make more informed decisions. Instacart will also work with public- and private-sector partners to explore and evaluate additional innovative approaches to provide consumers with health and nutrition information.

- **Expand our healthy recipe library**

We're expanding our library of healthy recipes and our partnership with Hearst Magazines by adding an expansive list of nutritious recipes from select Hearst brands, including *Women's Health*, *Men's Health*, and *Prevention* magazines. In turn, these publications can also use easy linking tools that will make their content shoppable via Instacart, helping consumers quickly and easily access the convenience of online grocery for their favorite healthy recipes.

- **Partner with leading nonprofits in the food-as-medicine space**

Instacart will continue to work with food-as-medicine stakeholders through membership in organizations like the Milken Institute Feeding Change initiative and Food as Medicine Task Force as well as the Tufts' Friedman School Food & Nutrition Innovation Council.

- **Study the health impact of medically tailored grocery programs**

In 2023, Instacart will partner with academic and research institutions to study the health impact of medically tailored groceries or food prescription programs that utilize Instacart products.

Instacart's Advocacy

To continue to advance this priority, we will work with policymakers and other stakeholders to support public policies that will:

- **Support produce prescriptions and medically-tailored meals as part of the health care system**

Support robust integration of food-as-medicine programs into the health care system and fund high-quality research initiatives. To increase fruit and vegetable consumption, Instacart supports policies that incentivize fruit and vegetable prescription programs (often referred to as "Produce Rx" programs) and their further incorporation into the health care system. To further improve treatment of diet-related chronic disease, Instacart will support incorporation of medically-tailored meals into the health care system. In addition, to drive the adoption of these programs by

practitioners, insurers, and health care agencies, Instacart supports funding research to measure the impact of produce prescriptions and medically-tailored meals on health and wellness.

Congress should consider funding this research at institutions like the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), which are well-positioned to assess the impact of food-as-medicine programs on health care outcomes, claims, and costs.

- **Expand the use of Medicare and Medicaid food-as-medicine programs**

Increase utilization of existing Medicare and Medicaid food-as-medicine programs. Medicaid and Medicare currently administer programs—such as Medicaid Section 1115 waivers and Section 1915 Home and Community Based Services waivers—that provide mechanisms for states and health insurers to waive federal guidelines in order to fund innovative approaches to serving beneficiaries and meeting the needs of long-term care recipients, including through medically tailored groceries, grocery delivery, and produce prescriptions.

Instacart encourages CMS and HHS to take steps to increase the utilization of these programs for food-as-medicine innovation, including by providing guidance and technical assistance to stakeholders and promoting awareness.

- **Reauthorize USDA’s produce prescription grant programs**

The 2018 Farm Bill authorized the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) at USDA, which includes three grants that provide funding to eligible states and nonprofits for the establishment of produce prescription programs. These grants expire in 2023. Instacart supports their extension in order to continue building capacity in the health care system for produce prescription programs that meet the needs of existing patients and reach underserved communities.

Conclusion

We're committed to making measurable and long-lasting progress on these policy priorities. We also recognize that this is an ambitious agenda—and we know we can't accomplish it alone. Expanding access to healthy food and fundamentally improving nutrition and health will require deep, sustained partnership across the public and private sectors in the years ahead.

We're in this for the long run, and we look forward to working with organizations and stakeholders who share our commitment to ending nutrition insecurity and promoting better health. We invite all policymakers, private sector partners, researchers, nonprofits, and every member of the Instacart community—from shoppers to customers to employees—to join us as we pursue this work together.

[Learn more at instacart.com/health](https://www.instacart.com/health)



References

¹ USDA. "Food Security: Key Statistics & Graphics." April 22, 2022. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/key-statistics-graphics/#:~:text=The%20prevalence%20of%20food%20insecurity%20was%20unchanged%20from%202019%20to,%20to%2010.5%20percent%20in%202019>

² Crespo, Gisela. "Poor diets threaten US national security—and it's serious." *CNN*. July 20, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/20/health/us-poor-nutrition-illness-death-wellness/index.html>

³ USDA. "USDA Actions on Nutrition Security." July 2022. <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-actions-nutrition-security-infographic.pdf>

⁴ Angela M. Odoms-Young, "Examining the Impact of Structural Racism on Food Insecurity: Implications for Addressing Racial/Ethnic Disparities," *Fam Community Health* 2018 (Apr. 1, 2019): 1, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5823283/>.

⁵ Angela M. Odoms-Young, "Examining the Impact of Structural Racism on Food Insecurity: Implications for Addressing Racial/Ethnic Disparities," *Fam Community Health* 2018 (Apr. 1, 2019): 1, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5823283/>.

⁶ USDA. "Food Security: Key Statistics & Graphics." April 22, 2022. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/key-statistics-graphics/#:~:text=The%20prevalence%20of%20food%20insecurity%20was%20unchanged%20from%202019%20to,%20to%2010.5%20percent%20in%202019>.

⁷ Canning, Patrick, and Rosanna Mentzer Morrison. "Quantifying the Impact of SNAP Benefits on the US Economy and Jobs." *Amber Waves: The Economics of Food, Farming, Natural Resources, and Rural America* 2019, no. 1490-2020-727 (2019).

⁸ USDA. "WIC Eligibility and Coverage Rates - 2018." June 25, 2021, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/eligibility-and-coverage-rates-2018>.

⁹ RA Nianogo, MC Wang, R Basurto-Davila, et al. "Economic evaluation of California prenatal participation in the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children (WIC) to prevent preterm birth." *Prev Med*, 124 (2019), pp. 42-49

¹⁰ Harry Zhang. "WIC Online Ordering in the COVID-19 Pandemic: Opportunities and Challenges." October 27, 2021. <https://healthyeatingresearch.org/2021/10/wic-online-ordering-in-the-covid-19-pandemic-opportunities-and-challenges/>.

¹¹ No Kid Hungry. <https://www.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/NKH-Instacart-Online-Shopping-Micro-Report-v2.pdf>

¹² Coleman-Jensen, Alisha, Matthew P. Rabbitt, Christian A. Gregory, and Anita Singh. "Household food security in the United States in 2018, ERR-270." US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service 47 (2019): 1-47.

¹³ Food Research and Action Center. "Rural Hunger in America: Get the Facts." 2018. <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/rural-hunger-in-america-get-the-facts.pdf>.

¹⁴ Rhone, Alana, Michele Ver Ploeg, Ryan Williams, and Vince Breneman. *Understanding low-income and low-access census tracts across the nation: subnational and subpopulation estimates of access to healthy food*. No. 1476-2019-1856. 2019.

¹⁵ Ally, Hardebeck. "4 Facts You Should Know About Hunger in Rural America". Feeding America. April 15, 2021. <https://feedingamericaaction.org/blog/rural-hunger/>.

¹⁶ Angela M. Odoms-Young, "Examining the Impact of Structural Racism on Food Insecurity: Implications for Addressing Racial/Ethnic Disparities," *Fam Community Health* 2018 (Apr. 1, 2019): 1, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5823283/>.

¹⁷ Schanzenbach, Diane, and Abigail Pitts. "How much has food insecurity risen? Evidence from the Census Household Pulse Survey." Institute for Policy Research Rapid Research Report (2020).

¹⁸ USDA Economic Research Service. "Food Access Research Atlas: Documentation." *USDA*. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/documentation/>

¹⁹ Annie E. Casey Foundation. "Exploring Food Deserts in the United States." February 13, 2021. www.aecf.org.

²⁰ Dillahunt, Tawanna R., Sylvia Simioni, and Xuecong Xu. "Online grocery delivery services: an opportunity to address food disparities in transportation-scarce areas." In *Proceedings of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, pp. 1-15. 2019.

²¹ Caroline George and Adie Tomer. "Delivering to deserts: New data reveals the geography of digital access to food in the U.S." May 11, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/delivering-to-deserts-new-data-reveals-the-geography-of-digital-access-to-food-in-the-us/>.

²² Caroline George and Adie Tomer. "Delivering to deserts: New data reveals the geography of digital access to food in the U.S." May 11, 2022.

²³ No Kid Hungry by Share our Strength and University of Kentucky, 2022. <https://www.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/NKH-Instacart-Online-Shopping-Micro-Report-v2.pdf>

²⁴ USDA. "USDA Actions on Nutrition." <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-actions-nutrition-security-infographic.pdf>

²⁵ Government Accountability Office, "Chronic Health Conditions: Federal Strategy Needed to Coordinate Diet-Related Efforts," (August 2021): 17-18, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-593.pdf>.

²⁶ U. Ramakrishnan. "Effect of Women's Nutrition before and during Early Pregnancy on Maternal and Infant Outcomes: A Systematic Review." *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology* no. 26 (2012): 285-301. Wiley Online: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1365-3016.2012.01281.x>

²⁷ Berkowitz, Seth A., Jean Terranova, Liisa Randall, Kevin Cranston, David B. Waters, and John Hsu. "Association between receipt of a medically tailored meal program and health care use." *JAMA internal medicine* 179, no. 6 (2019): 786-793.

²⁸ Berkowitz, Seth A., Jean Terranova, Caterina Hill, Toyin Ajayi, Todd Linsky, Lori W. Tishler, and Darren A. DeWalt. "Meal delivery programs reduce the use of costly health care in dually eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries." *Health Affairs* 37, no. 4 (2018): 535-542.

²⁹ Berkowitz, Seth A., Jean Terranova, Liisa Randall, Kevin Cranston, David B. Waters, and John Hsu. "Association between receipt of a medically tailored meal program and health care use." *JAMA internal medicine* 179, no. 6 (2019): 786-793.

³⁰ Trapl, Erika S., Samantha Smith, Kakul Joshi, Amanda Osborne, Michele Benko, Anna Thornton Matos, and Shari Bolen. "Peer reviewed: Dietary impact of produce prescriptions for patients with hypertension." *Preventing chronic disease* 15 (2018).

