

FOOD is MEDICINE



Good nutrition is essential for leading a healthy life.

Not only does a well-balanced diet support fundamental growth and development, but food can be medicine and a key way to reduce the risks for or symptoms of chronic disease. Improved access to healthy food must be a priority in our health care system.



ACCESS

11%

OF THE DISTRICT IS CONSIDERED A FOOD DESERT

Many communities in Washington, D.C., have **high levels of poverty and barriers** that prevent residents from accessing healthy food. Approximately **11% of the District of Columbia's total area** is considered a food desert.¹

FOOD DESERT



A **food desert** is a geographic area where residents have limited access to affordable healthy foods.² More than half of these areas (**51%**) are located in **Ward 8**, with food deserts concentrated in Anacostia and Barry Farm. There are also food deserts in Mayfair (Ward 7) and Ivy City (Ward 5), as well as in other parts of the city.³

51%

OF FOOD DESERTS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ARE LOCATED IN WARD 8

DID YOU KNOW?



68,900

PEOPLE IN THE DISTRICT ARE FACING HUNGER.⁴

More than half

OF ALL ADULTS LIVING IN WASHINGTON, D.C., ARE OBESE OR OVERWEIGHT.⁵

70%

OF DISTRICT HOUSEHOLDS SAY THEY BUY INEXPENSIVE, UNHEALTHY FOOD AS A COMMON STRATEGY FOR COPING WITH HUNGER.⁶



PROGRAMS

AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia (DC) offers programs that reflect a **"food is medicine"** approach.

MEAL DELIVERY PROGRAM

AmeriHealth Caritas DC enrollees who have prediabetes, diabetes, or high blood pressure, as well as pregnant enrollees, can **sign up to have medically tailored meals delivered right to their door.**



60,233

MEALS DELIVERED TO

372

INDIVIDUALS IN 2022, IN COLLABORATION WITH MOM'S MEALS

PRODUCE PRESCRIPTION PROGRAM (PRODUCE RX)

Produce Rx—launched by DC Greens in partnership with Giant Food, AmeriHealth Caritas DC, and the DC Department of Health—**aims to integrate healthy food access into health care.** The program enables medical professionals to prescribe fresh fruit and vegetables to patients who receive Medicaid benefits through AmeriHealth Caritas DC and are experiencing diet-related chronic illnesses. Produce Rx also helps clinics support patients who are living in poverty.


AmeriHealth Caritas
District of Columbia

To learn more about how AmeriHealth Caritas DC addresses enrollees' nutritional needs, visit www.amerihealthcaritasdc.com.

SOURCES:

¹ <https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Food-ACCESS-in-DC.pdf>

² <https://www.medicalexpress.com/articles/what-are-food-deserts-definition>

³ <https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Food-deserts-Randy-Smith-2017.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/district-of-columbia#:~:text=In%20District%20of%20Columbia%2C%2068%2C900,of%20them%20in%202017%2C890%20are%20children&text=face%20hunger,to%20meet%20their%20food%20needs>

⁵ <https://dchealth.dc.gov/service/obesity-overview>

⁶ <https://www.capitalareafoodbank.org/hunger-in-our-region/>