

Food is the best medicine

September 2023 - January 2026



FBM Evaluation

Food is the Best Medicine (FBM) from Ascension Seton is an 8-week postpartum Food Is Medicine program delivering weekly support during the fourth trimester. When a food insecure family declines participation, is found ineligible, or is unable to participate due to practical barriers, the program also uses a “no-wrong-door” approach by providing a \$100 H-E-B grocery gift card for immediate support.

Feeding High-Need Families



2 of 3
Household
income <\$15K/yr



4 of 5
Non-English
speaking

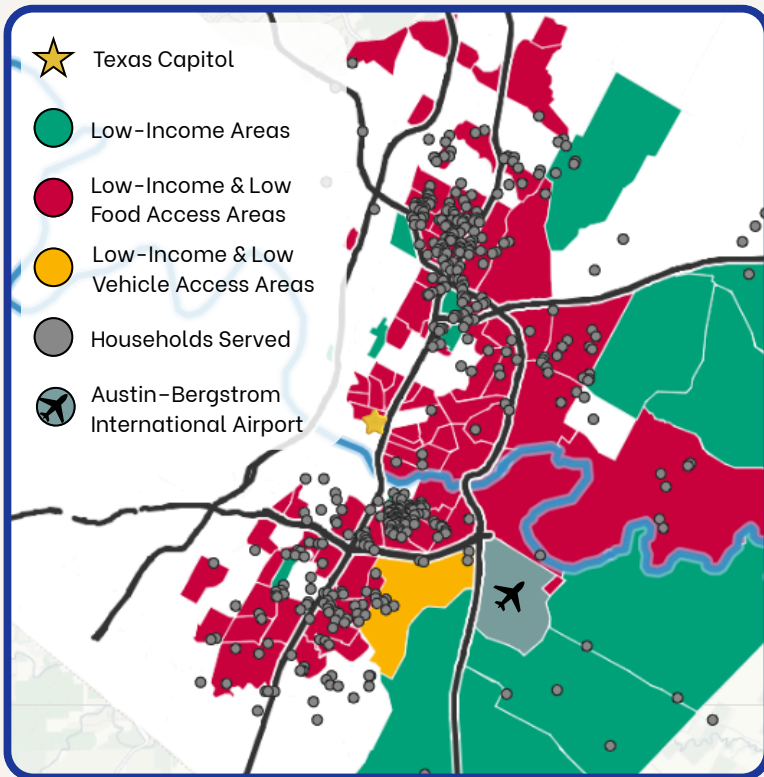


43%
No high school
diploma



4.5
Average
household size

Delivery Map Within Food Insecure Areas



428 households served across Austin-Travis County primarily within USDA classified food insecure census tracts.⁵

Why This Matters for Texas

Currently, 16% of Texans are food insecure, and the cost is substantial: a 1% increase adds ~\$400 M in healthcare costs.¹ This contributes to worse postpartum depression, breastfeeding outcomes, and infant hospitalizations.^{2,3}

Food is the Best Medicine is a targeted program, and national analogs like WIC show measurable impact and strong ROI—up to **\$3.13 saved per \$1** invested in early postpartum nutrition support.⁴

Program Outputs



428
Households
Served



51,633 lbs
Food
Delivered



50,488
Total
Meals



836*
\$100 Grocery
Cards Distributed



\$10
Cost per
Meal



3,237
Successful
Deliveries

*Gift card distribution began in May 2022.



1-5



Results in 8 Weeks



FBM Evaluation

29%
▼ DECREASE

Drop in Postpartum Depression

- Participants positively screened as depression decreased by 29%

19%
▼ DECREASE

Food Insecurity Reduced

- Food insecurity decreased by 19%
- Measured with the USDA 6-item screener

74%
▲ INCREASE

Increased Fruit & Vegetable Consumption

- Produce consumption improved by 74%
- Based on self-reported dietary frequency

28%
▲ INCREASE

Improved Perceived General Wellness

- Health improved for 28% of participants
- 4 in 5 maintained or improved their health

Program Publicity

In the Spotlight



9 media features
(7 local | 2 national)

On the Stage



15 conference invitations
(8 posters | 2 panel | 5 orals)

Sharing Work



6 professional events
(2 webinars | 4 summits)

PARTICIPANT VOICE

★★★★★ 99% Positive Reviews

“One of my doctors asked if I wanted to consider medication for [postpartum] depression and I said I didn’t feel it necessary yet as I felt it was more situational. The next day I began crying feeling very alone in my situation when the doorbell rang and it was y’all’s package. It felt like it came at the perfect time and truly made me feel supported and relieved.”

– FBM Program Participant

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★★★★★ 99% Positive Reviews

“...I’m from [Bali] . When a woman gives birth, our community would help [with] our needs, just like people [say] it takes a village to raise a child. Here [it is] only me and my husband [who] raise our baby. He cooks, cleans and helps me a lot during this journey. And with your help, that’s really ease[d] our tasks. I really hope that every woman in the US in the future who experience this journey would have easy access for healthy food...”

– FBM Program Participant

Learn More



Explore our research outcomes, citations, and more