

NOURISHING OUR COMMUNITY



20 ANNUAL 25 REPORT

Rooftop Farm
Therapeutic Food Pantry
Teaching Kitchen
Value Based Procurement

@nourish_bmc

BOSTON
MEDICAL
CENTER

REPORT OUTLINE

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NOURISHING OUR COMMUNITY 2025

At Boston Medical Center, we know that access to healthy, affordable food has a significant effect on health. For more than 20 years, BMC has led the way in establishing innovative programs that tackle systems and upstream drivers of food insecurity and support our long-held belief that food is medicine. Through the years, we have strengthened our commitment to prioritize food as medicine and are a national model in this space for other hospitals. Today, our expansive Nourishing Our Community Program brings together many effective services, community partnerships, and research projects that play a vital role in reducing food insecurity and advancing health equity in Boston.

This year marked a significant milestone with the launch of Nourish at Home, our Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) program that brings nutritious, culturally appropriate food directly to families through a collaborative partnership between the GROW Clinic, Nourishing Our Community, Nubian Markets, and DoorDash. In just the first six months of recruitment, we've enrolled 200 families receiving bi-weekly deliveries, with each food box thoughtfully designed with kids and families in mind.

Our Therapeutic Food Pantry reached a historic milestone, serving over 81,000 patients this year—up from just 18,000 in 2001—while continuing to provide tailored nutrition support every two weeks. The two Rooftop Farms supply fresh, culturally diverse produce grown from crops recommended by our patients and community members to the pantry, Teaching Kitchen, and hospital food services, while also supporting local food assistance programs. The Teaching Kitchen expanded its reach through 18 classes per month across virtual and in-person formats, offering hands-on cooking education in multiple languages to patients, staff, and community members.

Through value-based procurement initiatives and partnerships with community-owned businesses like Nubian Markets and Mei Mei's dumpling, we're investing in local food systems while building community capacity and economic opportunity. We're proud to share more about this year's accomplishments across all our program areas.



MEET THE TEAM

Senior Leadership



Bob Biggio

Chief Sustainability Officer
and Senior Vice President
of Real Estate and Facilities
BMC Health System



David Maffeo

Executive Director of
Support Services and
Sustainability BMC Health
System

Nutrition Director



**Olivia (Weinstein) Thomas,
MS, RD, LDN**
Director of Nutrition
Innovation and
Implementation

Sustainability



Margot Tang, MD
Value Based Procurement
and Sustainability Lead



Anna Goldman, MD
Clean PowerPrescription
Lead

MEET THE TEAM

Teaching Kitchen



Gabrielle Simons, MS, RD, LDN
Teaching Kitchen Manager



Paige Rizzuto MPS, RD
Virtual Culinary Dietitian

Food Pantry



Latchman Hiralall, DTR
Food Pantry Manager



Derek Liverpool
Food Pantry Assistant



Troy Fernandes
Food Pantry Coordinator

Rooftop Farms



Sarah Hastings
Rooftop Farm Manager



Olivia Grieco, MS
Rooftop Farm Education and
Outreach Manager



ROOFTOP FARMS



ROOFTOP FARMS

The rooftop farms reached new heights in 2025, expanding their impact through enhanced pollinator activity, broader community programming, innovative vegetable trials, and key infrastructure improvements. By advancing growing methods and welcoming new partnerships, the farms continued their commitment to cultivating crops that honor the diverse heritages of our community and sharing food systems knowledge through on-farm educational programming. Despite typical year-to-year farming fluctuations including spring weather challenges, the rooftop farms maintained consistent production and continued to supply fresh produce to our programs and community partners. Steady harvests enabled abundant donations throughout the year, while hands-on educational programming fostered meaningful connections between the local community and sustainable food systems.

WHAT KINDS OF CROPS DID THE FARM GROW?

HIGH SUCCESSION CROPS

Crops that grow & mature quickly!
i.e. lettuce, turnips, baby kale, cilantro



CONTINUOUS HARVEST CROPS

Crops that can be revisited every week for more pickings!
ie. kale, collards, basil



CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT CROPS

Heritage crops from different parts of the world.
i.e. callaloo, okra, malabar spinach



EDIBLE FLOWERS AND MEDICINALS

Blossoms for pollinators, bouquets, teas, and tinctures
i.e. verbena, marshmallow, feverfew, zinnia



ROOFTOP FARMS

Boston Medical Center Health System has two rooftop farms.

Power Plant Farm

Power Plant Farm spans 5,000 sq. ft. on the rooftop of the BMC power plant building. Of this space, 2,658 sq. ft. is dedicated to active crop production, with the remainder serving as pathways and operational areas.

Newmarket Farm

Newmarket Farm spans 7,300 sq. ft., with 4,228 sq. ft. dedicated to soil-based crop production. The farm features clover-planted pathways that support pollinator activity while maintaining accessibility.

2025 Rooftop Farms Team Structure

- Two full-time farm staff members
- Seasonal team with varying employment periods (6 weeks to 6 months)
 - Five interns supporting farm operations:
 - One 3-month intern from Wellesley College (funded by their school)
 - One 6-week intern from Communities for People sponsored by Boston Public Schools (high school student who had been in the foster care system)
 - Three additional interns hired by BMC (ranging 3-5 months)
- 1,400 total visitors
- 840 volunteers participated in hands-on learning through one-hour sessions

The farms' staffing model is intentionally structured to advance education and community engagement while optimizing production within a limited urban footprint. This approach supports hands-on learning experiences, builds community capacity, and creates accessible pathways for people of all experience levels to engage with sustainable food systems, while achieving yields per square foot that significantly exceed those of comparable urban farms.

FARM IMPACT STATISTICS

		
Total pounds grown	Retail value	Crop Variety
2025 7,952	\$56,843	50
2024 9,828	\$63,939	46

ROOFTOP FARMS

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- MIT Anthropology Department and Urban Planning Department
- Communities for People Partnership: Foster Care Intern
- Climate Beacon Conference Speaker
- Harvard Medical School Food is Medicine Guest Lecture
- Delicious Living Nutrition Dietetic Internship Guest Lecture
- Collaboration with Northeastern environmental science course



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2026

- Power Plant Farm will not be in operation due to facilities construction project.
- Building academic partnerships
 - Northeastern Environmental Science semester-long course on air quality and plants.
- A focus on direct, creative engagement with partners off site
- Honey harvest (fingers crossed)
- New intern model
- Installation of educational kiosks at both sites

THERAPEUTIC FOOD PANTRY



THERAPEUTIC FOOD PANTRY

The Therapeutic Food Pantry reached historic milestones in 2025, serving 87,256 individuals—the highest number in the program's history—and surpassing 1.5 million people served to date since the pantry's founding in 2001. Through dedicated staff, committed volunteers, and strong internal partnerships, the pantry maintained consistent operations while expanding its reach to vulnerable populations. The program's continued growth reflects BMC's unwavering commitment to providing tailored nutrition support that addresses both medical needs and food insecurity for patients and their families.

WHAT KINDS OF FOODS DOES THE PANTRY OFFER?

The Therapeutic Food Pantry provides patients with a three-day supply of food tailored to their household size and medical conditions. Each visit is designed to support both nutritional health and disease management, ensuring families have access to foods that align with their dietary needs. The pantry offers a well-rounded selection of nutritious staples across multiple food categories:

- Fresh produce: apples, oranges, collards, cabbage, lettuce, etc.
- Protein: meat, fish, eggs
- Dairy: milk, cheese, yogurt
- Grains: white and brown rice, regular and whole wheat pasta
- Cereals: hot and cold varieties
- Canned goods: pasta sauce, tuna, beans, etc.



THERAPEUTIC FOOD PANTRY

2025 Team Structure

- Four full-time pantry staff members
- Two interns
- Approximately 30 volunteers throughout the year
 - One dedicated volunteer contributing four full days per week

The pantry's operations are sustained by a committed team of staff and volunteers who ensure consistent, compassionate service to patients and families. This structure allows the pantry to maintain regular hours, accommodate bi-weekly visits for hundreds of households, and provide personalized support tailored to each family's medical and cultural needs.



PANTRY IMPACT STATISTICS



Food Boxes for home deliveries and curbside care

2025 3,103

2024 3,328



Thanksgiving packages distributed

617

607



Pounds of food approximately dispensed each year

750,000

750,000



THERAPEUTIC FOOD PANTRY

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

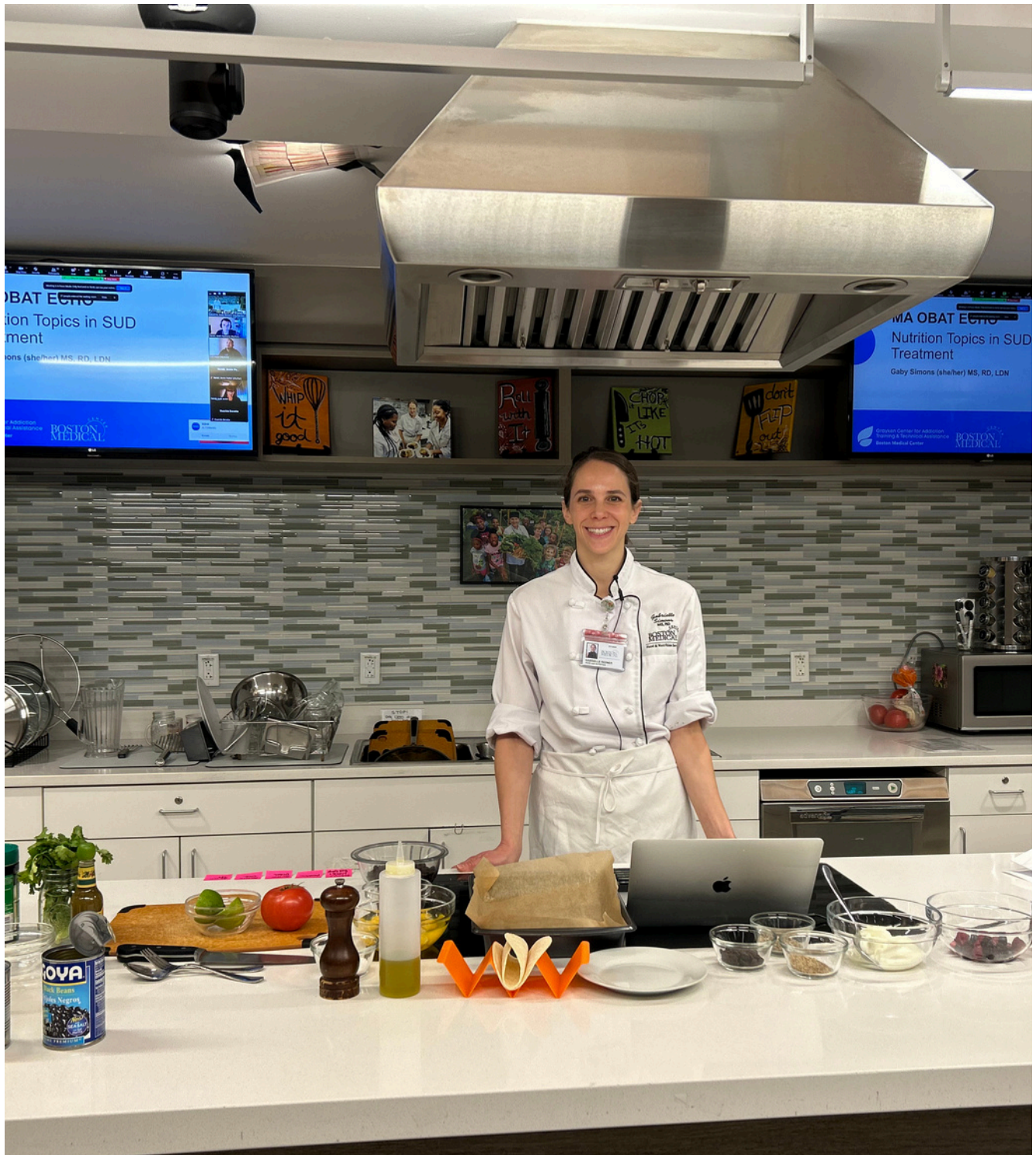
- Served 87,256 individuals this year—the highest number in the program's history
- Surpassed 1.5 million people served to date since the pantry's founding in 2001
- Provided critical assistance to 996 families through specialized partnerships with the Refugee Women's Health Clinic and Curbside Care (ambulance) program
- Returned to full staffing capacity with the addition of new team members
- Received more than 1,000 pounds of healthy foods from BMC's Pharmacy Department annual food drive



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2026

- Restart home delivery services using DoorDash to expand access for patients facing transportation barriers
- Engage in research initiatives to evaluate program quality and inform continuous improvement
- Continue sourcing nutritious food items to meet the evolving needs of our participants

TEACHING KITCHEN



TEACHING KITCHEN

Since 2008, the Teaching Kitchen has served as a vibrant hub for culinary and nutrition education, welcoming patients, staff, medical trainees, and members of the broader Boston community. The Teaching Kitchen experienced a highly successful year in 2025, operating numerous in-person and virtual classes throughout the year while launching new research initiatives, pilot programs, and collaborative partnerships. Led by two culinary-trained registered dietitian nutritionists and frequently co-facilitated by community members, clinical partners, and volunteers, the Teaching Kitchen provides accessible, hands-on learning experiences in multiple languages that build food preparation skills, deepen nutrition knowledge, and foster meaningful community connections.

HOW MANY CLASSES DOES THE TEACHING KITCHEN OFFER?

The Teaching Kitchen continued to expand its reach and impact in 2025, offering culturally responsive programming that meets the diverse needs of BMC's patient population, staff, and broader community. The teaching kitchen delivered an average of 18 classes per month across virtual, in-person, and hybrid formats.

There were 5 programs offered bilingually in Spanish or Haitian Creole and English:

- Cooking for Recovery Series
- Centering Pregnancy
- Taste of Home
- Tofu for Healthy Aging
- WellSense Health Plan programs



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TEACHING KITCHEN

2025 Team Structure

- Two full-time culinary-trained registered dietitian nutritionists
- 19 volunteers and interns throughout the year:
 - 6 interns (Boston University, Boston College)
 - 6 volunteers (Boston University, Harvard University, New York University, other)
 - 5 corporate volunteers
 - 2 fellows (Manzi Fellowship, Colgate University)
- 15 guest instructors (volunteer culinary educators from the community)

The Teaching Kitchen's robust volunteer and intern program creates opportunities for future nutrition and culinary professionals to gain hands-on experience planning and implementing evidence-based, culturally inclusive programming. Guest instructors from diverse cultural backgrounds bring authentic culinary traditions and community expertise, enriching the educational experience while strengthening connections between BMC and the communities it serves.

TEACHING KITCHEN IMPACT STATISTICS



Average monthly in-person class participation

2025 143

2024 72



Average number of classes offered monthly

18

14



Average monthly virtual class participation

56

75

TEACHING KITCHEN

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- Served 1,322 participants from May-November 2025
- Operated 22 unique programs serving patients (59%), community members (27%), staff (9%), and students (5%)
- Offered 5 bilingual programs
- Hosted 17 guest culinary educators who shared dishes from diverse cultures
- Completed 3 cohorts of Cooking for Recovery, an IRB-approved research project
- Secured \$45,862 in grants and generated \$3,375 in fee-for-service revenue



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2026

- Continue to create strategic partnerships and collaborations that strengthen community connections and expand program reach
- Advance ongoing research initiatives to build the evidence base for culinary nutrition interventions
- Expand programming to meet growing demand across patient, staff, and community audiences
- Add one part-time team member to increase programming capacity and support continued growth



VALUE BASED PROCUREMENT

Value-based procurement at BMC represents a strategic commitment to health equity through local food systems investment. By prioritizing local, sustainable, and culturally relevant food sources, these efforts aim to increase patient and staff access to healthy options while building community capacity and supporting the local economy. In 2025, this work expanded through new local partnerships, deepened community engagement, and increased regional and national leadership opportunities.

BMC's value-based procurement work gained visibility through participation in key regional and national initiatives. The team represented BMC in the City of Boston's Green Ribbon Commission Boston Anchor Values-Based Food Purchasing Core Group, contributing to citywide efforts to strengthen anchor institution food purchasing practices. At the national level, membership in the National Academy of Medicine's Climate Communities Network provided opportunities to share BMC's climate and sustainability work at their national conference and the Climate & Health Summit.

WHAT IS VALUE BASED PROCUREMENT?

Value-based procurement in health systems refers to purchasing practices that consider outcomes and long-term value, not price alone, by evaluating how goods or services contribute to health outcomes, quality, and overall system goals (Vogler et al., 2019).



Vogler, S., Zimmermann, N., & Habl, C. (2019). Understanding the components of value-based procurement. *Journal of Pharmaceutical Policy and Practice*, 12, 25.
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6944603/>



VALUE BASED PROCUREMENT

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- Collaborated with the Food & Nutrition Services operations team to onboard local vendors, increasing local, sustainable food spending with a focus on plant-based foods, local produce, and BIPOC-owned businesses including Chang Shing Tofu, Boston Food Hub, and Mei Mei Dumplings
- Strengthened partnership with Nubian Markets, a local café and halal butcher celebrating the culinary traditions of the African diaspora, which provides prepared meals in BMC cafeterias and serves as the primary vendor for the Nourish at Home food box delivery program
- Partnered with the Teaching Kitchen on a grant from the National Academy of Medicine's Climate Communities Network to develop culturally relevant, multilingual food and nutrition materials for BMC patients and staff
- Strengthened relationships with community partners, including visiting the Eastie Farms greenhouse and hosting their youth group at the rooftop farm



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2026

- Continue expanding partnerships with community-owned food businesses
- Increase percentage of locally sourced food across all hospital food operations
- Strengthen supply chain relationships that support cultural responsiveness and community economic development
- Advance climate-focused food systems work through regional and national collaborations

PARTNERS

External Partners

Boston Public Schools
Harvard University
The Advent School
Northeastern
Boston University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
John Hancock
Genentech
Citizens Bank
Point32Health
TD Bank
Loomis
Takeda, Santander
Massachusetts Financial Services
WellSense Health Plan
Back on My Feet



Point32Health



Boston Medical Center Partners

Grayken Center for Addiction
BMC Cancer Center
Department of Nutrition and Weight Management
Department of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics
Department of Family Medicine
Immigrant and Refugee Health Center
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Department of Geriatrics
Care Management Social Work Department
WRAP clinic
Project EVOLVE
Organizational Development Team
Clinical Nutrition
Food and Nutrition Services
DEI Nursing Council

