



Breaking Barriers: How In-Home Delivery Is Reducing Food Insecurity for Austin Residents with Disabilities

A Qualitative Evaluation of In-Home Food Delivery for Residents with Disabilities

CONDUCTED BY

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Austin Delivery Pilot: A Model for Dignified, In-Home Food Assistance



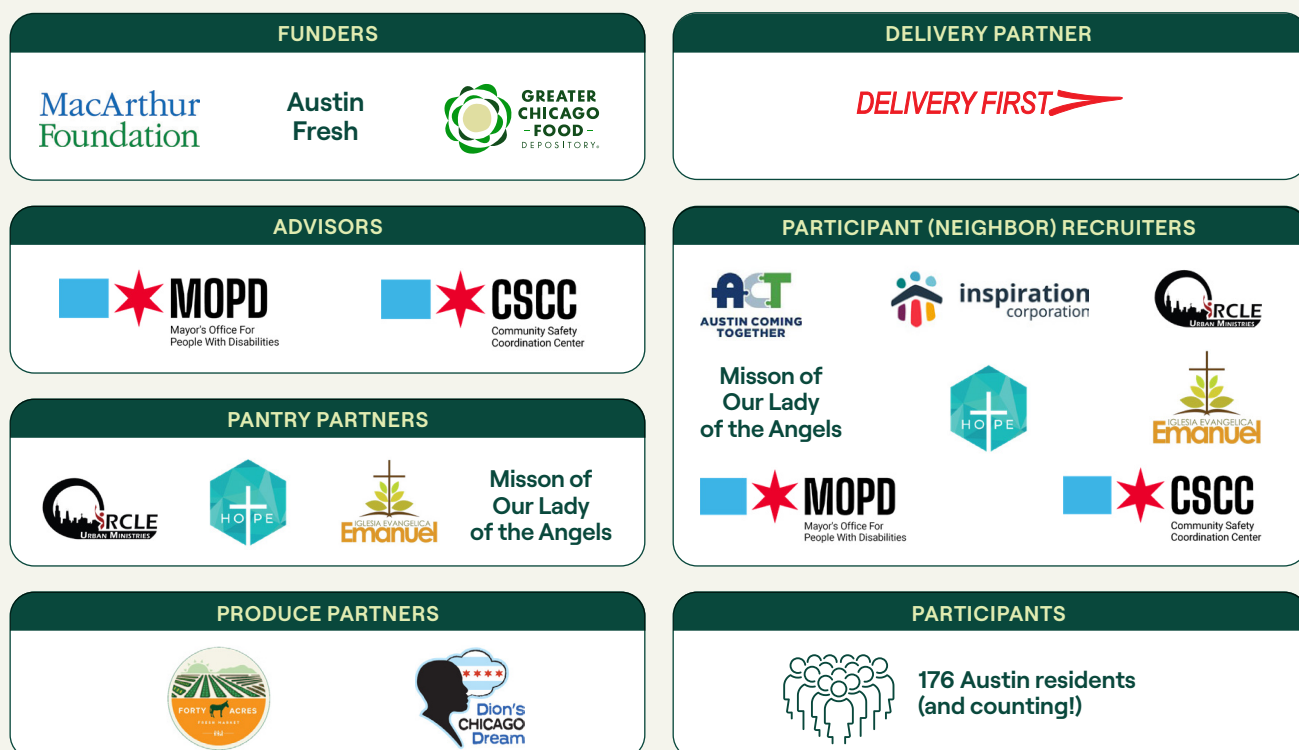
Program Overview

Launched in January 2023, the Austin Delivery Pilot (ADP) is an innovative, community-driven initiative designed to reduce food insecurity for residents with disabilities in Chicago's Austin neighborhood. ADP provides twice-monthly, in-home deliveries of healthy groceries and fresh produce to individuals who face both economic and physical barriers to food access. Building on its success and the insights of participants and partners, the program is preparing to evolve into a next-generation model—powered by technology that offers neighbors greater dignity, choice, and ease, and lays the foundation for a sustainable and scalable solution to food access.

Led by Vivory Community in partnership with local food pantries, produce vendors, and a neighborhood-based delivery service, ADP reflects a grassroots model rooted in dignity, choice, and accessibility. Over **24 months**, the program served **176 neighbors** and delivered more than **7,500 boxes of food**—totaling over **245,000 pounds** of nourishment—directly to residents' doors and kitchen counters.

Our Gratitude

The Austin Delivery Pilot was only possible thanks to the dedication of our local partners—from food pantries and produce vendors to delivery drivers and city agencies. This work reflects the power of what's possible when community-led solutions are trusted, resourced, and carried forward by those who know their neighborhoods best.



Why Austin?

The Austin neighborhood has long faced structural inequities that contribute to high rates of food insecurity and disability. With over 28,000 residents reporting disabilities and limited access to healthy food outlets, Austin was a clear priority for intervention. Many residents lack reliable transportation, live far from full-service grocery stores, and struggle to access food pantries due to mobility or health challenges.

The ADP model directly addressed these barriers by offering:

- **Self-attested, low-barrier enrollment**
- **Customized box options** (standard, vegetarian, non-dairy)
- **Choice of delivery location** (front door, inside home, or kitchen counter)
- **Monthly feedback** via bilingual SMS surveys


“ Before the month is out, I get a little short with food. By bringing a box when they do, I’m able to have a few more days before shopping.”

“ I’m on a lot of medication, and everything is going up so much. You go to the store and spend \$100, and you don’t even need a bag.”

ADP Neighbors

The Three Pillars of ADP


From design to delivery, the Austin Delivery Pilot was grounded in three guiding principles, reflected throughout the program and this report:



PILLAR 1

Technovation


Using technology to streamline logistics and remove barriers to access



PILLAR 2

Spirit of Inclusivity

Centering dignity, autonomy, and accessibility in every step



PILLAR 3

Strengthening Austin

Investing directly in local organizations, jobs, and community trust

“ The Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities proudly partnered with Vivery as they built an innovative and efficient model in the fight against food insecurity. This model maximizes using technology and activating local community resources and talent to provide delivered meals to our community, including people with disabilities. The lessons learned will help build future opportunities to serve even more people across our city.”

Commissioner Rachel Arfa, Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, City of Chicago

Technovation: Building on Community Roots

ADP builds on years of groundwork in Austin. After piloting our tech tools with 21 food pantries in 2021, we deepened our roots through in-home delivery for seniors. In 2023, we partnered with Austin leaders to bring a disability-inclusive delivery model to life—designed by and for the community. Through smart logistics and simple tools like SMS updates and box preference forms, we made consistent food delivery easy, flexible, and inclusive.



Our Grassroots Approach

To ensure that ADP was built with intention and responsiveness, we followed a step-by-step community-informed process:

- 1 **Partnered to identify community needs** – Collaborated with local food pantries and city agencies to shape the program vision.
- 2 **Tested and refined our technology** – Piloted tools with pantry partners and adapted features like logistics coordination and interactive maps based on user feedback.
- 3 **Launched inclusive enrollment** – Designed a short, digital, and disability-friendly application that respected self-attestation.
- 4 **Strengthened local capacity** – Provided operational funding and tools to help food pantries, vendors, and delivery partners scale their work.
- 5 **Listened and improved in real time** – Used text surveys and monthly feedback to refine service and address gaps.



“ Sometimes I get stressful about not having enough food, but then I always rely on the food that [ADP] brings every 2 weeks.”

ADP Neighbor

Participant Impact

The Jai Lab at Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine conducted a qualitative evaluation of the program, including surveys from 63 participants (36% response rate) and 21 in-depth interviews. Their findings demonstrate clear, measurable impact:

22% of recipients screened positive for food insecurity before ADP **but were food secure after program participation**

59% found it easier to **access healthy food through the program**

43% **reported lower stress levels** around food access

High satisfaction ratings:



were satisfied or very satisfied with pantry box quality



were satisfied or very satisfied with produce box quality

Spirit Of Inclusivity: Centering Dignity By Design

ADP placed dignity at the center of its design. From easy, proof-free enrollment to letting neighbors choose where their boxes were placed—on the porch, at the door, or inside their home—every element reflected care and respect. The program used SMS messaging to share updates and gather monthly feedback, ensuring voices were heard and services continuously improved.



Innovative Delivery Model

In-home delivery was a defining feature of ADP. The ability to bring groceries beyond the threshold—sometimes directly to a kitchen counter—was a game-changer for those with mobility impairments. For many, it meant they no longer had to navigate stairs, buses, or long pantry lines with walkers or canes.

The program achieved a **97% successful delivery rate across 6,400+ deliveries**. Participants appreciated both the customization and consistency of the service, with text alerts and follow-up calls helping ensure smooth coordination.

“It was a true partnership—partnership with our produce vendor, partnership with Vivory, and partnership with our transportation company. It wasn’t looked upon as several organizations—it was unified.”

–ADP Partner

Technology Performance Achievements

7,536 healthy food boxes delivered to neighbors in need

20,000+ food-related SMS messages sent to program participants

81% of neighbors who engaged with our technology said they were likely or very likely to recommend ADP to others



“It enhanced what we do and allowed us to deliver more frequently and serve more residents. ADP also furthered cooperation among its partners by sharing and distributing responsibility in a more balanced way.”

ADP Partner

Strengthening Austin: Local Leadership and Lasting Impact

This pillar focused on fueling the ecosystem of care that already exists in Austin. By investing directly in local organizations and people, ADP amplified the capacity, leadership, and economic power within the neighborhood.



ADP's strength came from a powerful, local coalition:

4 Austin food pantries
packed and coordinated box pickups

1 neighborhood-based delivery service hired from within the community

2 local produce vendors supplied fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables

City agencies and funders provided strategic and financial support

Together, these partnerships:



Injected \$192,000
in local purchasing power



Created or sustained 12 jobs
(7 within existing staff, 5 new roles)



Supported \$163,000
in food assistance infrastructure



Distributed \$4,000
in stipends to local pantry volunteers

“ This program is deeply personal to me as someone living with a disability. This initiative highlights the impact that's possible when community partners, city agencies, and organizations come together to break down barriers and build truly inclusive solutions. Our partnership goes beyond addressing food insecurity—it reflects a shared commitment to dignity, inclusion, and intentionality. This work is a testament to what's possible when people with disabilities are centered in the solutions we create.”

Bernardo Gomez, Community Engagement Manager,
Community Safety Coordination Center (CSCC), City of Chicago



What We Learned

This work taught us that:

- **Low-barrier access matters.** Self-attestation, flexible delivery, and simple text communication built trust.
- **Dignity is in the details.** Small actions—like setting a box on the kitchen counter—made a big difference.
- **Community knows best.** Local partners guided every phase of this work, and their insights strengthened the model.
- **There's more to do.** We heard calls for deeper box customization, better communication between partners, and expanded household coverage. These guideposts shape our vision forward.

“ This program showed what’s possible when we design around people’s real needs and remove the obstacles. We didn’t just deliver food—we delivered peace of mind, choice, and dignity. Now we need help keeping it going.”

Azita Habibi, Executive Director,
Vivory Community

Your Support Will Help Sustain this Critical In-Home Food Delivery Program

Just **\$100 provides 65 nutritious meals**. Every dollar received will be matched by the **Thierer Family Foundation**, doubling your impact.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support. Together, we can deliver more than food—we can deliver dignity, health, and peace of mind.

To support the program, visit

vivory.org/support-adp

