



LIMA/ALLEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Winter 2025 • Volume 29 • Issue 1



WELCOME

This newsletter is intended to provide timely updates on local transportation projects, area (re)development initiatives, as well as transit and paratransit related news, highway safety, and other activities undertaken by the Planning Commission and our partners. The newsletter is supported in part with funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), and the Planning Commission member political subdivisions.

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Lima / Allen County
**REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION**

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A PUBLIC

OPEN HOUSE

for LACRPC - hosted at ALLEN COUNTY RTA

**Tuesday, April 1, 2025
2:00-6:00 p.m.**

**ACRTA - 200 E. High St.
Lima, Ohio 45801**

LACRPC and ODOT staff will present the draft of the 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Allen County, discuss upcoming regional plans, and recognize the recent designation of the West Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization (WORPO). LACRPC's draft TIP will be open for public comment.

For more information about WORPO, or to view the draft plan of the 2026-2029 TIP, please visit www.lacrpc.com

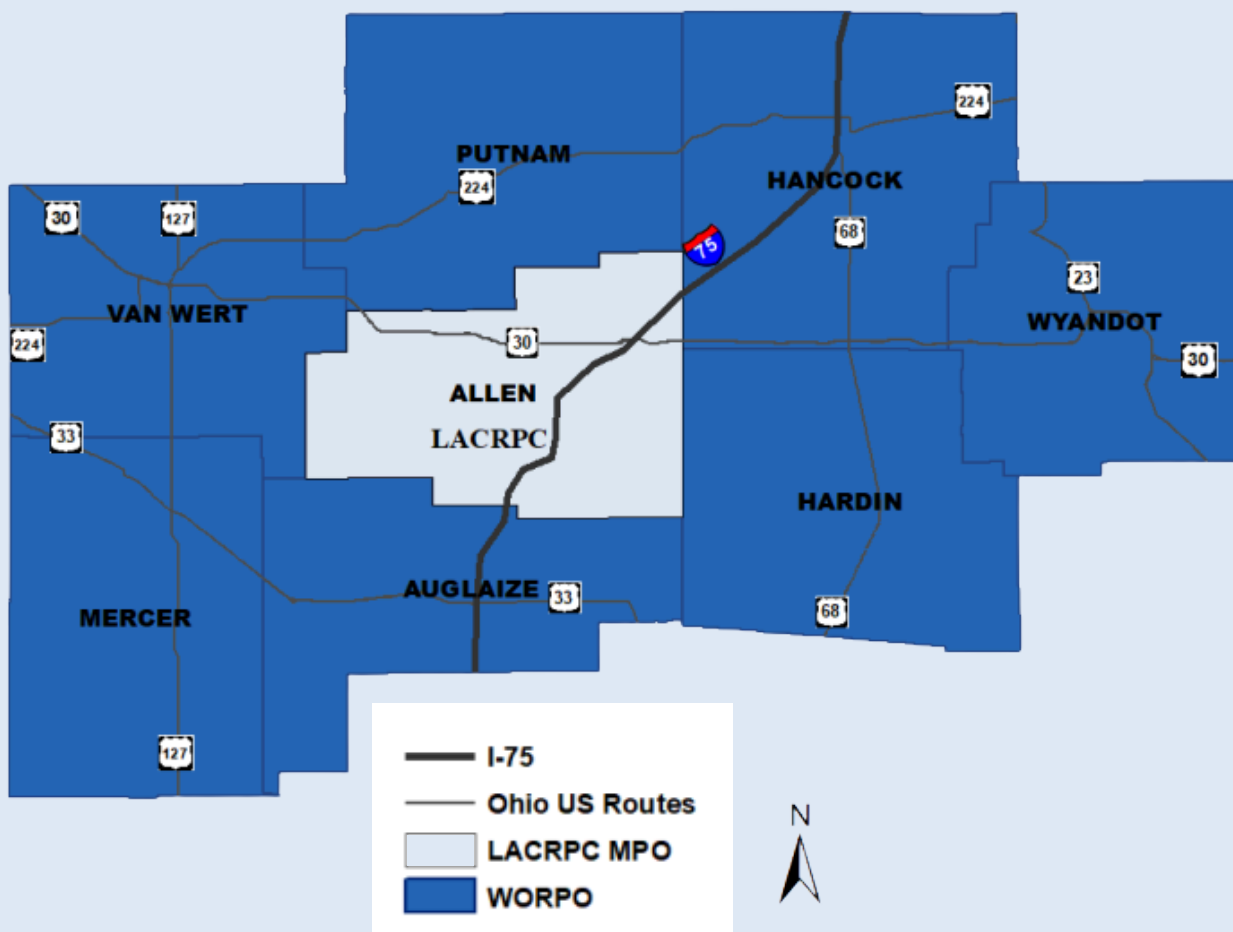
Governor DeWine Gives WORPO Official Designation

Staff members at LACRPC enjoyed an early Christmas present when they received good news from the governor's office via the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) on Dec. 23. Governor DeWine sent an official letter stating that he has now designated the West Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization (WORPO) as a Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO). WORPO is now one of seven RTPOs in the state of Ohio.

The designation of WORPO will enable those rural counties that have been historically underserved to obtain more federal funding for

projects. The WORPO members include the Ohio counties of Wyandot, Hancock, Hardin, Auglaize, Mercer, Van Wert and Putnam.

The goal of WORPO is to conduct coordinated, comprehensive and continual regional transportation planning for non-metropolitan areas. The RTPO will assist the member governments in identifying the unique issues and needs that come with living in rural communities and help them to obtain the funding and resources needed to ensure that they are better integrated in the development and implementation of regional transportation goals.



Bike/Ped Task Force Honors Allen Co. Volunteers

Several staff from LACRPC attended and contributed to the annual awards for the Bike/Ped Task Force on the evening of Dec. 11.

Senior Planner, Cody Doyle, from LACRPC was the event's guest speaker (pictured right).



Doyle discussed the role of LACRPC, its current projects, and the importance of safe

and comprehensive planning for active transportation throughout Allen County.

Staff that received volunteer awards for their work with the taskforce were Cody Doyle and Megan Kinnear. Adam Haunhorst received the highest honor of the evening, the "Bike/Ped Advocate of the Year."

Thank you to Bike/Ped Task Force Chairpersons Bri Buzard of Allen County Public Health and Josh Unterbrink of Activate Allen County, who will soon be transitioning to a new role as CEO of The Lima-Allen County Chamber of Commerce.



LACRPC Planning Engineer Adam Haunhorst receives an award from Bri Buzard and Josh Unterbrink for the Allen County Bike/Ped Advocate of the Year.



Leadership changes in Chamber of Commerce and Activate Allen County

The Allen County Chamber of Commerce has appointed Josh Unterbrink as its new CEO, as Jed Metzger stepped down to retire on Dec. 31, 2024.

Unterbrink joins the chamber as former co-director of Activate Allen County, where he worked for seven years. Kayla Monfort, Activate Allen County's other co-director with Unterbrink is now the sole director of the organization.

Metzger will stay on part-time with the Chamber Foundation in order to help Unterbrink transition smoothly into his new role.

Prior to his retirement, Metzger worked for the chamber for 25 years.



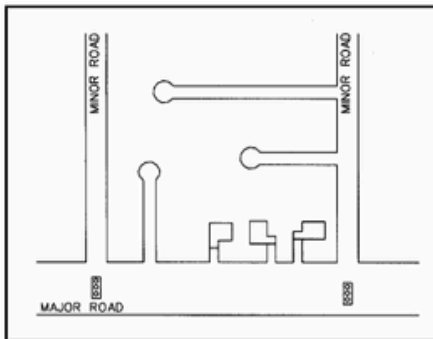
NEW ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN APPROVED

The Allen County Board of Commissioners recently approved an updated access management plan for the county. The plan, which was a collaborative project of Allen County Engineer Brion Rhodes, took about two years to complete.

Two LACRPC staff members -- Cody Doyle, Senior Planner, and Adam Haunhorst, Planning Engineer -- served on a board for about one year that helped with updating regulations for the plan. They offered expertise in the new plan regarding both the RPC and MPO when it came to feedback needed with the planning commission, roadways, effects on land division, and development implications. They also advocated for maintaining ODOT and FHWA regulations, which the transportation planning industry considers best management practices.

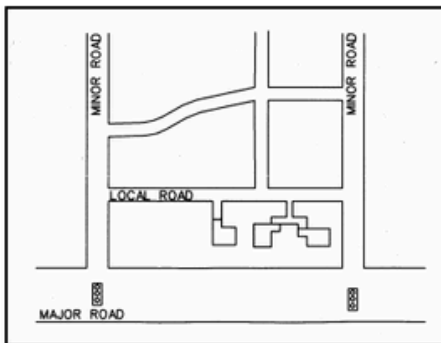
Shown on the right are a few of the plan's existing inefficiencies and their proposed improvements. These are just some of the updates available to view and read. Any interested parties are encouraged to review the new Allen County Engineer's Roadway Access Management Plan, which can be found at www.allencountyohengineer.com, as well as and LACRPC's website under the "Reports" section: www.lacrpc.com.

Existing Inefficiently Managed Rural Area Access



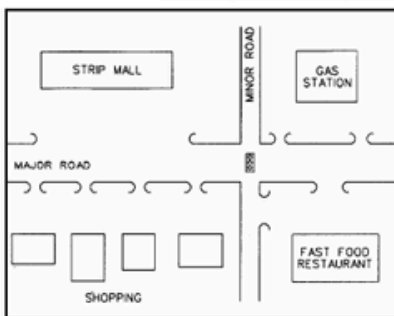
- Numerous and closely spaced driveways located on major highway
- Subdivisions not designed to provide interconnection of local streets
- Less attractive to potential buyers
- Driveways not shared

Proposed Rural Area with Improved Access Management



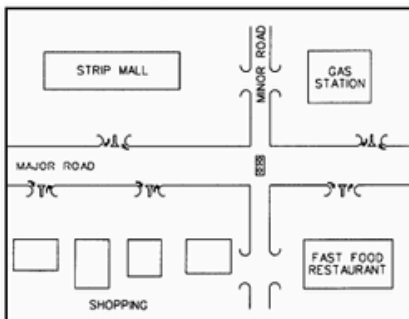
- Shared driveways on local road
- Subdivisions designed to provide interconnection of local streets
- More attractive to property owners, thus improving quality of life.
- Functional integrity of major road maintained
- Traveler safety enhanced

Existing Inefficiently Managed Commercial Area Access



- Numerous closely-spaced driveways along major road
- Wide, undefined driveway for strip mall
- Few driveways from minor road
- Unrestricted turning movements to/from drives causing potential for crashes
- Intimidating and confusing to local and through vehicles

Proposed Commercial Area With Improved Access Management



- Driveways on major road permit only right turn in and right turn out, minimizing conflict points and crash potential
- Increased access from minor road
- Driveways on minor roads are directly opposite each other
- Well-defined driveways meeting appropriate design standards
- Attractive and uncluttered to travelers and customers
- Traveler safety enhanced

LACRPC AND ACRTA PARTNERSHIP PLANS

Staff from Lima-Allen County Regional Planning (LACRPC) and Allen County Regional Transit Authority (ACRTA) have been working closely on several projects, which are outlined below:

- 1.) LACRPC staff assisted in researching, writing and submitting a grant application with ACRTA staff. It was submitted to the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) on Dec. 23 for an operating expansion program called “Baby on Board.” It is being modeled after a program of the same name in Cuyahoga County. If awarded funding, this project would give free monthly ACRTA bus vouchers to expectant and new mothers. It would be managed, in part, by local health and social service agencies in Allen County. The need has arisen in Allen County due to an influx of new residents, a greater need for infant car seats, and a population of people struggling to obtain valid Ohio drivers’ licenses. Depending on demand for the vouchers and amount of funds awarded, the vouchers could also extend to the mothers’ partners and other minor children in the households.
- 2.) LACRPC staff is currently helping to manage ACRTA’s Facebook page, with possibilities of adding other social media platforms. At minimum, LACRPC will post once per week covering ACRTA events, announcements and/or staff recognitions.
- 3.) LACRPC is in the beginning stages of developing “how-to-ride” videos that will be made available in English, Haitian Creole and Spanish. The videos are expected to be completed and made available to the public by early February. They will be posted on ACRTA’s website, Facebook, and YouTube.
- 4.) LACRPC will assist in completing an annual report for ACRTA, which is scheduled to be published in the spring of 2025. It will be available on ACRTA’s website and on Facebook.

PROCESSED BY LACRPC

2024 YEAR-TO-DATE

Lot Split	120
Replat	0
Floodplain Development Permit	12 new 3 renewals

ALLEN COUNTY SAFE COMMUNITY COALITION NEWS: GRANT AWARD / DRIVE SOBER MESSAGE / WINTER PARTNER'S BREAKFAST

The Lima-Allen County Safe Community Coalition met on Dec. 13 at Mercy Health to honor its coalition members, announce the recent FY25 grant award of \$46,200 from the Ohio Department of Public Safety, and discuss the importance of driving sober this winter.

Twenty coalition members attended the biannual breakfast, sponsored by Mercy Health - St. Rita's Medical Center, where safety advocates come together to recap safe driving campaigns, like Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.

Megan Kinnear, chairperson for Lima-Allen County Safe Community Coalition, said the grant became effective Oct. 1, 2024 and runs through Sept. 30, 2025.

The awarded amount is based on crash fatalities in Allen County and is used to promote safety with transportation while driving, riding a bicycle or walking. Around half of all counties in Ohio operate a Safe Community Coalition and manage a grant program such as this. Each grantee's award amount varies based on the number of fatalities in each county.

"We have a big push right now to make sure drivers are making smart choices. Not only are wintery roads dangerous, when you add drinking to the mix, it can result in a horrible outcome," said Kinnear.

Members of the coalition want to urge drivers this holiday season to designate a sober driver, and to find ways to enjoy celebrating with one another without the use of alcohol or anything else that causes impairment.



Top and bottom photos on the right were taken from the news coverage from Hometown Stations.

LIONS WAY PATHWAY - BLUFFTON

A ceremony dedicating the addition of a bike and pedestrian pathway in the Village of Bluffton was held on Sept. 17, 2024. The Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission (LACRPC) was part of a collaborative effort made in order to integrate the new shared use path that runs along the south side of SR 103/Jefferson Street. The path follows Commerce Lane to the Lions Way Trail.

The ceremony was attended by Bluffton residents and Pathway board members and stakeholders including the Ohio Department of Transportation, a Hancock County Parks/Engineer, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and LACRPC.

As the county's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), LACRPC was one of the major donors because of its allocation of CMAQ funds towards the project.

CMAQ, which stands for "Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality," is provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The program provides a flexible funding source to transportation projects that reduce congestion and improve air quality which meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act.



WINTER LACRPC CLOSINGS: JANUARY 1, JANUARY 20, FEBRUARY 17

UPCOMING MEETINGS AT LACRPC

Meetings are held at the specified times in the conference room of LACRPC. Meetings are open to the public.

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

CMTE	DATE	TIME	CMTE	DATE	TIME	CMTE	DATE	TIME
SRT	Fri, Jan. 10	8:00 am	DCC	Tue, Feb. 11	3:00 pm	DCC	Tue, March 11	3:00 pm
DCC	Tue, Jan. 14	3:00 pm	TAC	Tue, Feb. 25	1:30 pm	TAC	Tue, March 25	1:30 pm
CDC	Thu, Jan. 16	3:30 pm	DCC	Tue, Feb. 25	3:00 pm	DCC	Tue, March 25	3:00 pm
CAC	Tue, Jan. 21	10:00 am	AAC	Wed, Feb. 26	4:00 pm	AAC	Wed, March 26	4:00 pm
TAC	Tue, Jan. 21	1:30 pm	TCC	Thu, Feb. 27	3:00 pm	TCC	Thu, March 27	3:00 pm
AAC	Wed, Jan. 22	4:00 pm	EC	Thu, Feb. 27	4:00 pm	EC	Thu, March 27	4:00 pm
TCC	Thu, Jan. 23	3:00 pm	<p>Please see our website: www.lacrpc.com for up-to-date details about meetings in case of cancellations or rescheduling needs.</p> <p>Lima Allen County Regional Planning Commission 130 W. North St. Lima, OH 45801 www.lacrpc.com 419-228-1836</p>					
EC	Thu, Jan. 23	4:00 pm						
DCC	Tue, Jan. 28	3:00 pm						

DRINK AND DRIVE AND YOU'LL SEE MORE THAN
HOLIDAY LIGHTS.



Celebrate Safely this Winter!

DRIVE SOBER.

View our safe driving PSAs here:
www.lacrpc.com/press-releases/

2024 ALLEN COUNTY Q4 FATAL CRASH SUMMARY

**Allen Co. Traffic Fatalities:
 October - December 2024**

**Fatal
 Crashes**

**Total Fatalities
 (due to crashes)**

State/Federal Highways
 County Roads
 City Streets
 Township Roads

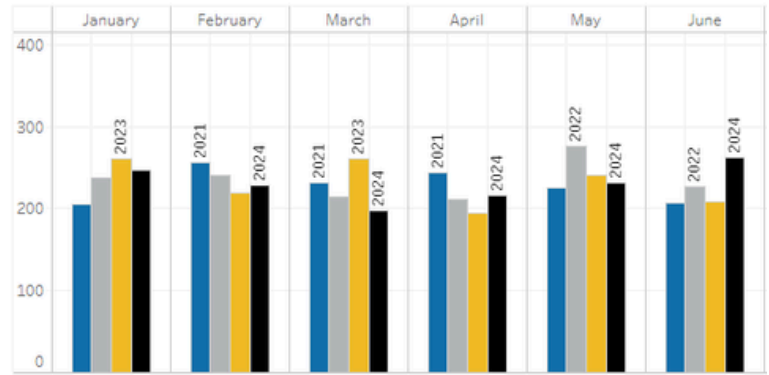
2
 0
 0
 1

3 (drivers)
 0
 0
 1 (bicyclist)

Ohio - Allen County All Crashes 2021-2024

Crashes by Variable

Alcohol-Related	428
Bicycle-Related	56
Commercial At-Fault	503
Commercial-Related	802
Distracted-Related	549
Drug-Related	137
Juvenile-Related	819
Mature-Related	4,048
Motorcycle-Related	177
OVI-Related	504
Pedestrian-Related	90
Speed-Related	1,405
Unbelted-Related	1,859
Youth-Related	4,039

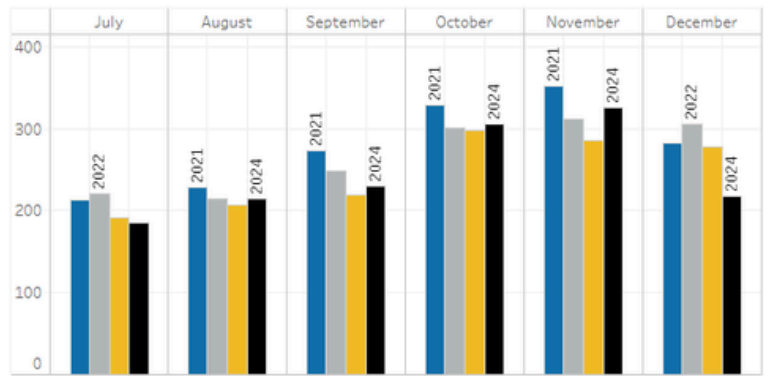


Crashes by Severity and Year

Full Year

Year-to-Date <= 12/30

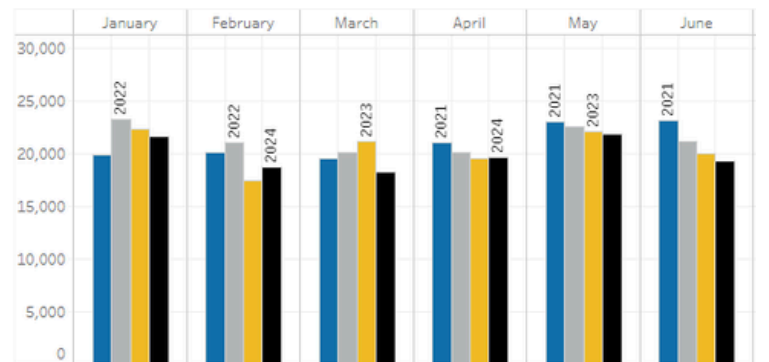
	Year			
	2021	2022	2023	2024
Fatal	23	13	10	9
Serious Injury Suspected	68	65	64	54
Minor Injury Suspected	391	333	297	323
Injury Possible	336	329	314	285
Property Damage Only	2,230	2,269	2,176	2,187
Grand Total	3,048	3,009	2,861	2,858
Fatalities	25	13	10	10
Unbelted Fatalities	8	4	3	5
Serious Injuries	90	83	72	67
Unbelted Serious Injuries	26	21	12	12



Ohio - All Counties All Crashes 2021-2024

Crashes by Variable

Alcohol-Related	39,756
Bicycle-Related	4,795
Commercial At-Fault	37,075
Commercial-Related	64,954
Distracted-Related	39,683
Drug-Related	12,655
Juvenile-Related	62,385
Mature-Related	355,225
Motorcycle-Related	15,991
OVI-Related	47,181
Pedestrian-Related	9,982
Speed-Related	116,036
Unbelted-Related	201,875
Youth-Related	318,309

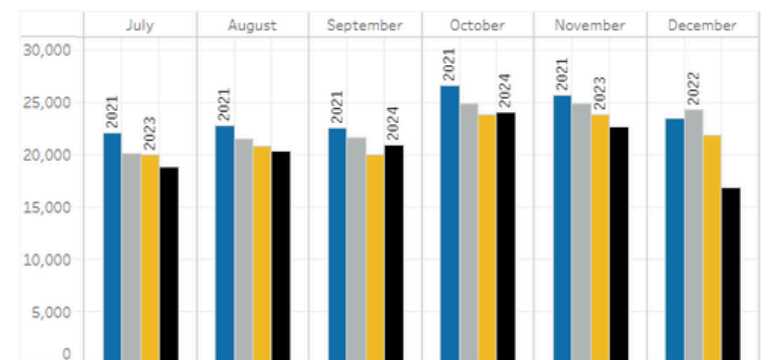


Crashes by Severity and Year

Full Year

Year-to-Date <= 12/30

	Year			
	2021	2022	2023	2024
Fatal	1,244	1,180	1,150	1,052
Serious Injury Suspected	6,405	6,163	6,059	5,965
Minor Injury Suspected	35,170	33,458	32,670	31,814
Injury Possible	28,202	26,327	25,171	23,688
Property Damage Only	198,658	198,382	187,576	180,329
Grand Total	269,679	265,510	252,626	242,848
Fatalities	1,356	1,275	1,242	1,131
Unbelted Fatalities	576	527	472	467
Serious Injuries	7,916	7,570	7,492	7,240
Unbelted Serious Injuries	2,373	2,173	2,161	1,889





BIKE & PEDESTRIAN COUNTS

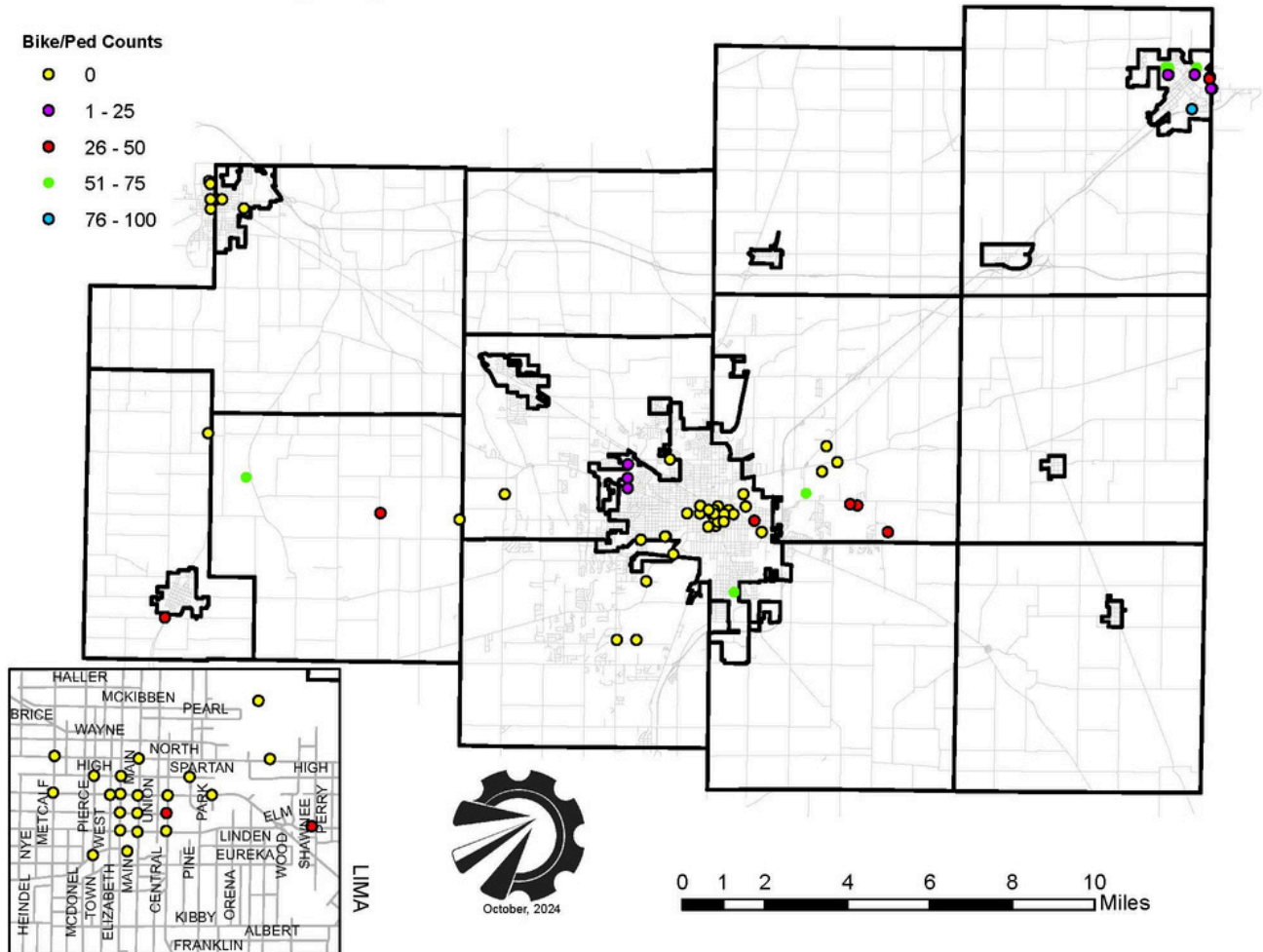
Thank you to those who participated in the “Bike & Pedestrian Counts” in Allen County from May 6-12 and again from Sept. 9-15. If you would like more information and/or would like to volunteer to help count/track bicyclists and pedestrians for the next count, please contact:

Kayla Monfort
Activate Allen County
kmonfort@activateallencounty.com

Bike/Ped count totals during May = 1,658

Bike/Ped count totals during September = 2,680

2024 Allen County September Bike/Ped Counts





What Are Produce Prescription Programs?

Produce Prescription (PRx) Programs are a way for healthcare providers to prescribe free fruits and vegetables for patients with chronic diseases and lack of access to nutritious foods. The prescriptions may be redeemed in the healthcare setting or at local farmers markets, mobile markets, brick-and-mortar or online grocery stores, or at food pantries that distribute fresh produce. Many programs also offer nutrition education opportunities.

The Challenge

- Diet-related chronic diseases are associated with **85% of healthcare spending** in the U.S.
- **Poor nutrition** is a leading cause of illness in the U.S.
- More than 1.6 million Ohioans are **food insecure**; and Black and Hispanic communities experience **higher rates** of food insecurity.
- More than 1 million Ohio adults have **diabetes**, and almost 1 million Ohio adults have **pre-diabetes**.

PRx Program Benefits

- PRx programs are **cost-effective**. A modeling study predicts that, if covered, fruit and vegetable incentives lead to \$39.7 billion dollars of annual healthcare savings for eligible Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries.
- PRx programs improve **nutrition** (food security, fruit and vegetable consumption), and **health outcomes** (A1c levels, BMI, blood pressure, and preterm birth rates).



What Do PRx Programs in Ohio Look Like?

Across Ohio, there are at least **30** different PRx programs, operating across **48** different sites.

In 2024, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) conducted a Landscape Assessment of PRx programs in Ohio. ODH surveyed 35 Ohio-based PRx program staff and interviewed 14 of the survey respondents. This brief highlights the key findings, as well as challenges faced, supports needed, and themes from interviews with PRx program leaders.

- **100%** of PRx programs involve a healthcare organization.
- **83%** of programs determine prescription amount and quantity based on size of the household.
- **63%** of programs offer nutrition education such as setting goals around nutrition, cooking demonstrations and classes, and/or distribution of educational resources.

Partnerships

57% partner with retailers (grocery stores, farmers' markets).
43% partner with food banks or pantries.
Additional partners include health departments, universities, insurance providers, coalitions, and non-profit organizations.

Screening Practices & EHR Use

90% screen for food insecurity.
77% screen for chronic conditions.
57% use Electronic Health Records (EHR) to screen, track, and refer patients to PRx.

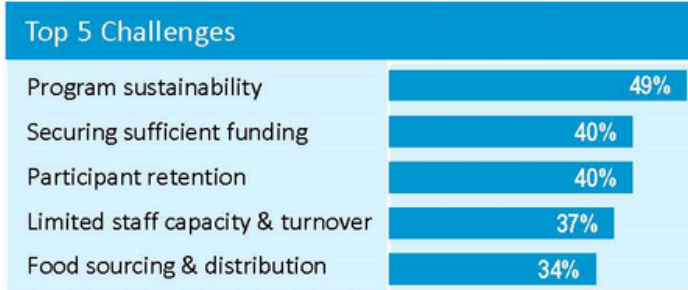
Redemption Options

46% Farmers markets.
37% Food pantries.
37% Onsite health system pantries/coolers.
31% Grocery stores.
29% Home delivery options.



What Do PRx Programs in Ohio Look Like? (cont.)

While PRx programs show positive health, nutrition, and cost-savings outcomes, program administrators face challenges such as unsustainable funding, clinical staff turnover, and low participant retention, as noted in both the [existing literature](#) and in the Ohio-based survey and interview results.



Current Funding

The majority of programs reported receiving funds from multiple sources including local foundations, healthcare systems, Medicaid Managed Care plans, hospital community benefit dollars, and federal funding such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP).



Themes From Ohio PRx Program Leaders

- **Strong social connections** with healthcare providers, farmers, pantry staff, and participants are key to PRx programs' success in encouraging program use, promoting behavior change, and improving retention.
- **Integrating Community Health Workers** and social workers into PRx programs enhances patient retention and connects them to additional needed resources.
- **Participant choice and supporting the local economy** are key considerations for PRx programs when designing the produce redemption options.
- **Prioritizing local or regional sourcing of produce** by PRx programs strengthens the state and local agricultural economy.
- **Stable funding is needed to expand and protect Ohio's PRx programs.** The majority of Ohio PRx programs are currently funded through grants, creating sustainability challenges.
- **Widespread interest exists in exploring statewide policy opportunities** such as the Medicaid 1115 Demonstration Waiver, In Lieu of Services, and/or Medicaid Value-Added Services that can provide coverage for nutrition services including PRx programs.
- **Cross-sector collaboration** across different PRx programs and Food is Medicine stakeholders will help expand the reach of PRx programs and support a pathway toward sustainable funding in Ohio.



For More Information

- For more information or if you are interested in helping to form a statewide Food is Medicine Coalition, contact Casey Slive, ODH Food Access Coordinator: casey.slive@odh.ohio.gov.