

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI- OSHER CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE HEALTH

Cincinnati, Ohio



The University of Cincinnati and UC Health envisioned the Blood Cancer Healing Center as a new model for integrative health—bringing wellness, education, research, and community engagement together in an environment where food plays an active role in healing. After exploring the concept of a teaching kitchen for approximately two years and studying successful programs elsewhere, the team used the BCHC renovation as an opportunity to establish a permanent home for this vision. Rippe Associates collaborated with UC, Champlin Architecture, and the broader project team to develop a highly visible and inclusive foodservice environment where participants could learn by doing, share meals, and better understand the connection between food choices and health.

Central to the approximately 7,000-square-foot program is a hands-on teaching kitchen supported by flexible dining and education space. Rather than simply watching demonstrations, participants can cook at five teaching stations equipped with residential-style equipment, helping translate culinary medicine and nutrition education into techniques that can realistically be used at home.

Details

Opening Date: January 2026

Equipment Cost: \$850,000

Project Size: 7,000 SF

Scope

Foodservice planning and design for the Blood Cancer Healing Center's teaching kitchen, café, and dining environment, integrating hands-on culinary education with flexible dining and event space, professional production support, and infrastructure for future foodservice needs.

One station was designed at an accessible height, while commercial production, refrigeration, storage, and warewashing functions provide the operational infrastructure behind the instructional environment. The equipment supports a broad plant- and healing-forward approach, with ranges, ovens, steam cooking, food processors, and countertop equipment accommodating a variety of preparation methods and educational programming.

Working within an existing building required careful planning to balance circulation, accessibility, flexibility, and operational support. Rippe organized the program in a progression from public-facing spaces to more service-oriented functions—from reception and flexible dining through the teaching kitchen to instructor support, production, storage, receiving, and dishwashing. Fixed glazing and double doors maintain a strong visual connection between the teaching kitchen and dining area without sacrificing valuable floor space, while movable furnishings allow the same environment to accommodate cooking classes, demonstrations, shared meals, and larger events. Compact work zones, equipment positioned near the point of use, centralized dishwashing, and separation of public and production workflows further improve operational efficiency.

The completed concept stands apart by treating the kitchen as more than a food-production space: it is a platform for health education and community connection within a larger wellness journey. By combining approachable residential-style teaching stations with professional foodservice infrastructure, the facility supports culinary education, clinical wellness, research, and community programming while remaining adaptable to future needs, including potential patient-related foodservice. The result provides the Osher program and UC Health with a flexible environment designed to help participants move beyond understanding healthy choices to developing the confidence and practical skills to make those choices part of everyday life.

