



Food Program Managers and Staff Participating in 10 Cents

10 Cents a Meal for Michigan’s Kids and Farms, administered by the Michigan Department of Education, matches what participating schools and other non-school sponsors spend on Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans with grants of up to 10 cents per meal. This brief is part of the *10 Cents a Meal 2021-2022 evaluation results: Amplifying Impact with More Michigan Farms and Foods*.

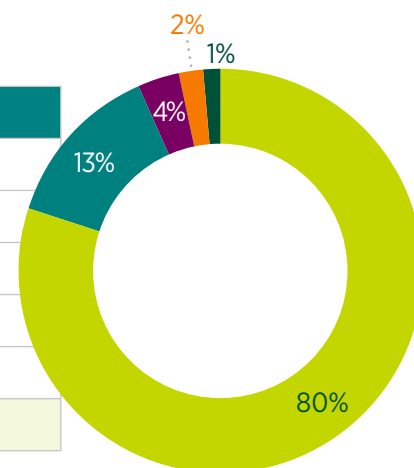
Food program managers (FPMs) at grantee sites are one of the primary groups of people directly engaged in 10 Cents a Meal for Michigan’s Kids and Farms (10 Cents).

The 2021-2022 program year had the highest number of participating grantees to date, with 257 across the state. The majority of grantees were public schools and districts (80%), but other types of grantees, including early care and education sites (ECEs), also participated, as seen in the chart below.



Table 5: 10 Cents Grantees by Type in 2021-2022

Grantee Type	Number of Grants
Public schools and districts	206 (80%)
Early care and education sites (ECEs)	34 (13%)
Non-public schools	9 (4%)
Residential child care institutions (RCCIs)	5 (2%)
Other non-school sponsors (ONSRs)	3 (1%)
Total	257



Michigan-Grown Food Purchasing Experience of Participating Food Program Managers

Previous evaluation findings have suggested that more years of experience with 10 Cents and other farm to school programs might lead FPMs to purchase a greater diversity of Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans for the program.¹¹ In the future, as more FPMs participate over time, evaluators can use these survey responses to investigate how FPMs’ experience influences their participation in 10 Cents, potentially including analyses related to foods they purchase and/or market channels they use.

Similar to previous years of 10 Cents, FPMs who participated in the 2021-22 year had varying years of experience participating in the program, purchasing local foods, and managing the food service program at their respective school, district, or center. In some cases, FPMs working in schools and RCCI’s, managed more than one food service program across districts and therefore represented more than one grantee participating in 10 Cents. In 2021-22, 12 FPMs managed food programs for two different schools and/or districts, and 2 FPMs managed programs for three different school districts. Additionally, these FPMs had different years of experience managing each food program, so all responses on behalf of a grantee were counted in analysis.

More than half (58%) of all FPMs were new to the 10 Cents program in 2021-2022. This was the second year of participation for a quarter (24%) of FPMs. Only seven grantees (3%) participated in 10 Cents for the maximum possible of six years, since the first pilot program year began in 2016-2017 with 16 grantees in just two regions of the state.

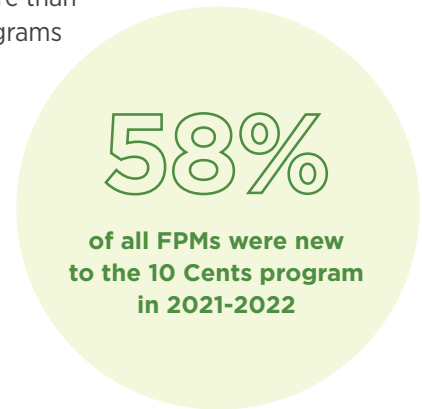
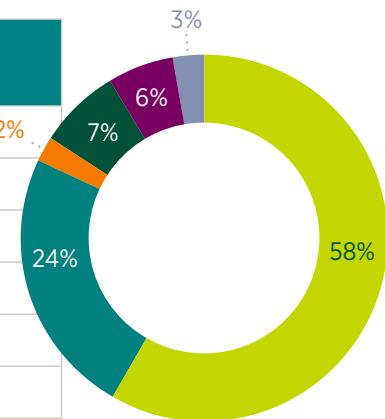


Table 6: Years of Participation in 10 Cents by Grantees in 2021-2022

Years of Participation in 10 Cents	Number (percent) of FPMs
1	150 (58%)
2	61 (24%)
3	6 (2%)
4	18 (7%)
5	15 (6%)
6	7 (3%)



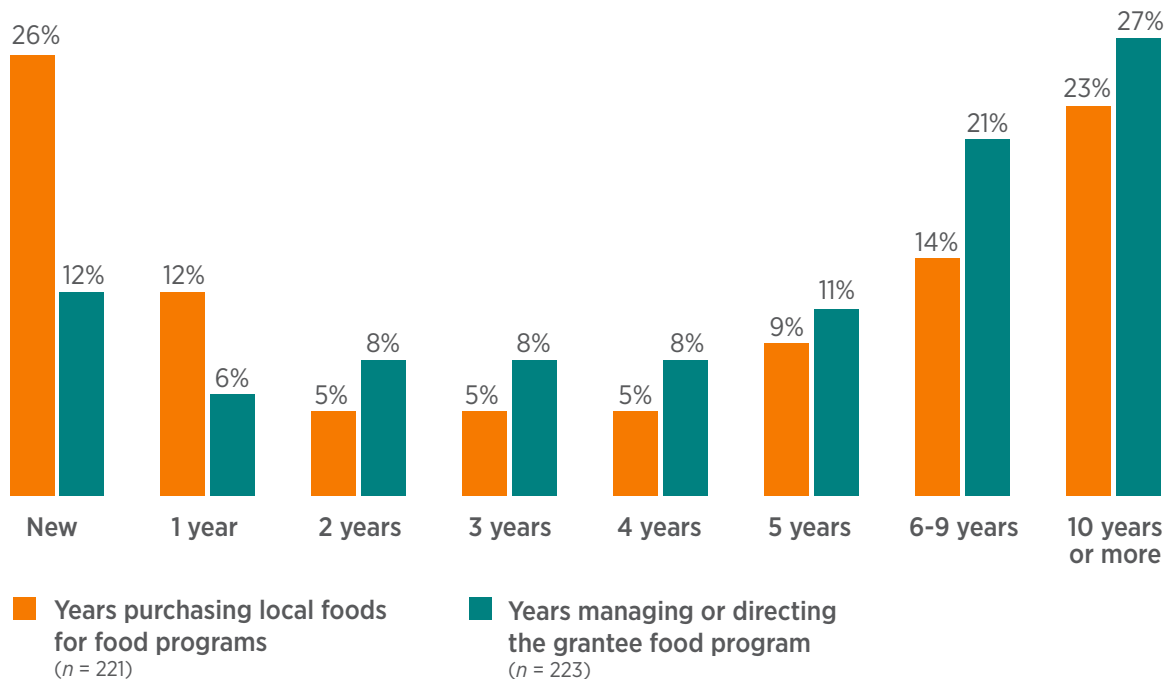
Note. N = 257

¹¹ Refer to “Farm to School Experience Matters: Insights From an Analysis of Food Service Director Behavior” from *What a Dime Can Do: An Evaluation of the 10 Cents a Meal Pilot*.

In the first survey (October), participating FPMs were asked about their local food purchasing experience. Nearly half of all responding FPMs had opposite levels of experience: nearly a quarter indicated that they had 10 years or more of experience purchasing local foods (23%, 51 grantees) while another quarter indicated that they were new (26%, 58 grantees) to this practice. Almost half (46%) of grantees new to 10 Cents had only one year or less of experience purchasing local foods while a third (32%) had at least six years or more of experience.

Finally, nearly half of all FPMs had six years or more of experience managing their respective food programs: 21% (47 grantees) of FPMs indicated 6-9 years and 27% (61 grantees) stated 10-19 years. Only 12% (27 grantees) were new to managing their programs. These findings show there could be a relationship between FPM experience managing food programs and purchasing local foods. As more grantees participate over time, this could be explored further to determine whether there is a correlation between experiences.

Figure 1: Years of Food Program Manager Experience Purchasing Local Foods for Food Service Programs and Managing or Directing Food Service Programs in 2021-2022





10 CENTS SPOTLIGHT

MICHELLE MORRISSEY

Director of Food Services at Battle Creek Public Schools

Morrissey has overseen the 10 Cents grant at Battle Creek Public Schools for four years by the 2021-2022 year. When asked about the different tasks she is responsible for, she shared,



On a daily basis it is anything and everything...from menu planning, orders, HR, grants, ensuring staff are on task for 12 buildings. The list of responsibilities is endless.



Photo credit: Michelle Morrissey

Battle Creek Public Schools is a public school district located in Calhoun County in Southwest Michigan. During the 2021-2022 school year, over 4,000 children were enrolled in the district, which includes preschool through 12th grade. Battle Creek Public Schools has been a grantee since 2018-2019.



Motivations, Barriers, and Challenges for Purchasing and Serving Local Foods

In the first evaluation survey (October), we asked FPMs about the motivators, barriers, and logistical challenges to purchasing and serving local foods in their food program.¹² This is the second year that all three questions were open-ended to allow participants to describe their feedback in their own words.

For the purposes of this evaluation, barriers were considered general and bigger picture obstacles that prevent or block a grantee's ability to purchase and serve local foods while logistical challenges were intended to be more specific to the operations of food service program operations, including how they work with food vendors. Many grantees reported similar responses to both challenges and barriers, such as supply chain issues, so improvements to this question design (potentially including descriptions of each) and/or the categorization of responses should be considered in future years.



We believe deeply in the value of teaching our youngest neighbors healthy eating habits that can positively affect their lifelong health.

— Early care and education grantee

¹² Refer to the [Technical Notes](#) for detailed response rates and analysis on these questions.

The top motivators for purchasing and serving local foods reported by FPMs were:

- 1 **benefits to children** (27% of reported motivators), included increasing their consumption of healthy and nutritious foods as well as providing educational opportunities;
- 2 **product attributes of Michigan-grown foods** (24%), such as freshness, increased quality, better taste, and increase in variety;
- 3 **supporting the community** (22%); and
- 4 **helping Michigan farms and food businesses** (20%).

Other motivators reported by FPMs (6%) included the benefit of additional funds from grant awards, the positive impact of program participation on public and community relations, and goals related to sustainability.



What motivates me to purchase locally is that I get to support my state and community. Small business owners, particularly minorities, often struggle and have to compete with big businesses, so by buying locally it helps me reach my goal of serving healthy foods to the children while keeping money and business in my community.

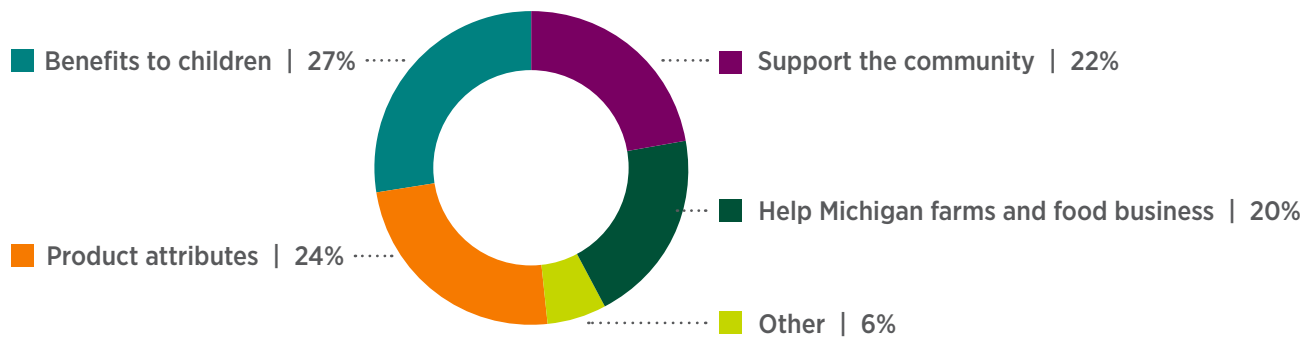
— Early care and education grantee



[10 Cents] enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices.

— Public school district grantee

Figure 2: Reported Motivators to Purchasing and Serving Local Foods by 10 Cents Grantees in 2021-2022



FPMs' responses about the top barriers and logistical challenges include:

1 Lack of availability of local foods

The lack of availability of local foods was cited in 38% of reported barriers and 25% of logistical challenges. This relates to the seasonality of Michigan produce and how it limited the availability of produce in the off-season (winter), as well as the lack of large volumes of local foods from farms and food suppliers.

2 Issues related to food service operations

A variety of **issues related to food service operations** were cited in 32% of reported logistical challenges and 23% of barriers. FPMs reported challenges with lack of available labor and capacity as well as equipment and storage, limited food service budgets, and restrictions to procure from local food suppliers through their food service management or vended meal company.

3 Supply chain issues

Supply chain issues were cited in 18% of reported barriers and 32% of logistical challenges. These reported issues were related to limitations in delivery methods from food suppliers to the grantees and information available from food businesses about local products such as the farm of origin.

“

We do not have a lot of places to buy in bulk locally, and with the shortages we are all facing it makes it hard to get anything.

— Public school grantee

“

Equipment and storage is limited; would love resources for serving line.

— Other non-school recipient sponsor grantee

“

To some level we have additional steps in ordering, receiving, storing and processing. These steps...don't seem that big of a deal when you add them together [but] as you deal with 2-3 extra farms or vendors, then it becomes a burden.

— Public school district grantee

Promotional and Educational Activities Supporting 10 Cents

The 2021-2022 program year was the first to allow grant funding to be used towards the purchase of Michigan-grown foods for supportive activities, such as taste testing and nutrition education, aside from the foods served in food programs. These activities may further engage children in farm to school programs and introduce them to Michigan-grown foods that grantees purchase and serve.

In each of the evaluation surveys conducted in the 2021-2022 program year (October, January, August), participating FPMs were asked about activities that have been conducted to support local foods. Note that these results may be limited by what the FPMs know about activities being conducted, and may be more likely to include activities related to the food program and/or cafeteria and less likely to capture all related activities conducted within the broader environment they operate within. Additionally, the supportive activities were reported by type and not by number of instances for each type.

Across the year, 211 different participating FPMs submitted 1,245 reports of types of activities conducted in support of 10 Cents throughout the school year. The key results are summarized below.

211

FPMs submitted 1,245 reports of types of activities conducted in support of 10 Cents

- **The average number of types of activities reported throughout the year was six (5.7)**, but 73 different grantees reported no supportive activities conducted across all surveys.
- **The top activities** reported by total percent of FPMs were:
 - **Promotional posters** (103 grantees, 49%),
 - **Nutrition education in the classroom** (69 grantees, 33%), and
 - **Nutrition education in the cafeteria** (69 grantees, 33%).
- The top activities reported by total number of activities were promotional posters (188 reports, 14%), social media (126 reports, 9%), nutrition education in the classroom (123 reports, 9%), and nutrition education in the cafeteria (121 reports, 9%).
- There were 27 different grantees who selected “other activities” and 31 grantees who selected “other classroom activities” during the year. Some of the responses mentioned were related to hands-on classroom activities, themed menu ideas, field trips, on-site farmers markets, informational materials, and partnerships with other programs.
- Although taste testing was only reported in 7% of responses by FPMs, it was considered the most successful (75 different grantees, 99 reports, 22%) by FPMs. Other top activities considered successful included promotional posters (46 grantees, 52 reports, 12%) and creative menu names for dishes featuring local foods (35 grantees, 43 reports, 10%).
- At least 42 Michigan-grown foods were tried through taste tests conducted by 75 grantees. Among other foods, Michigan-grown apples, blueberries, carrots, dry beans, and potatoes were taste tested, along with menu items such as hummus, smoothies, soups, salads, and bean muffins.

At least 42 Michigan-grown foods were tried through taste tests conducted by 75 grantees.



Taste testing and sampling gives our students the opportunity to try new food items that they may not otherwise.

— Public school district grantee



Photo Credit: Sarah Rypma

Figure 3: Promotional and Educational Activities Supporting 10 Cents by Percent of Grantees in 2021-2022

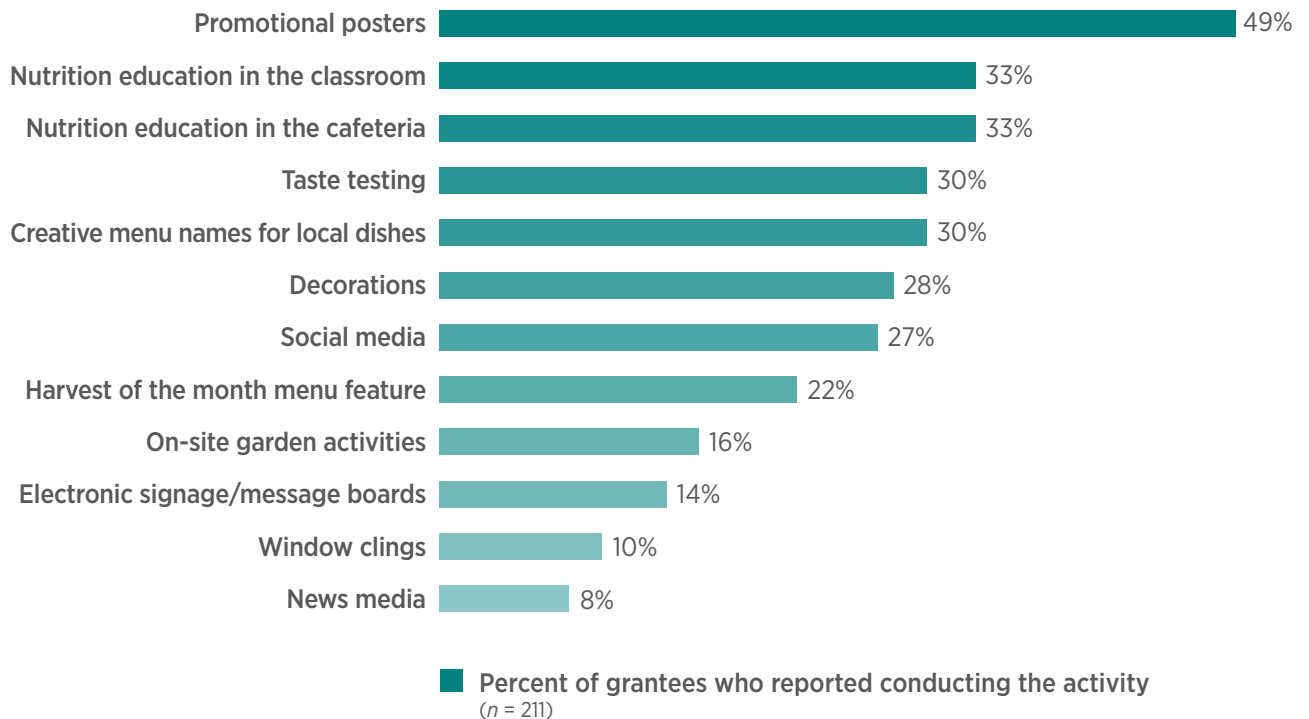
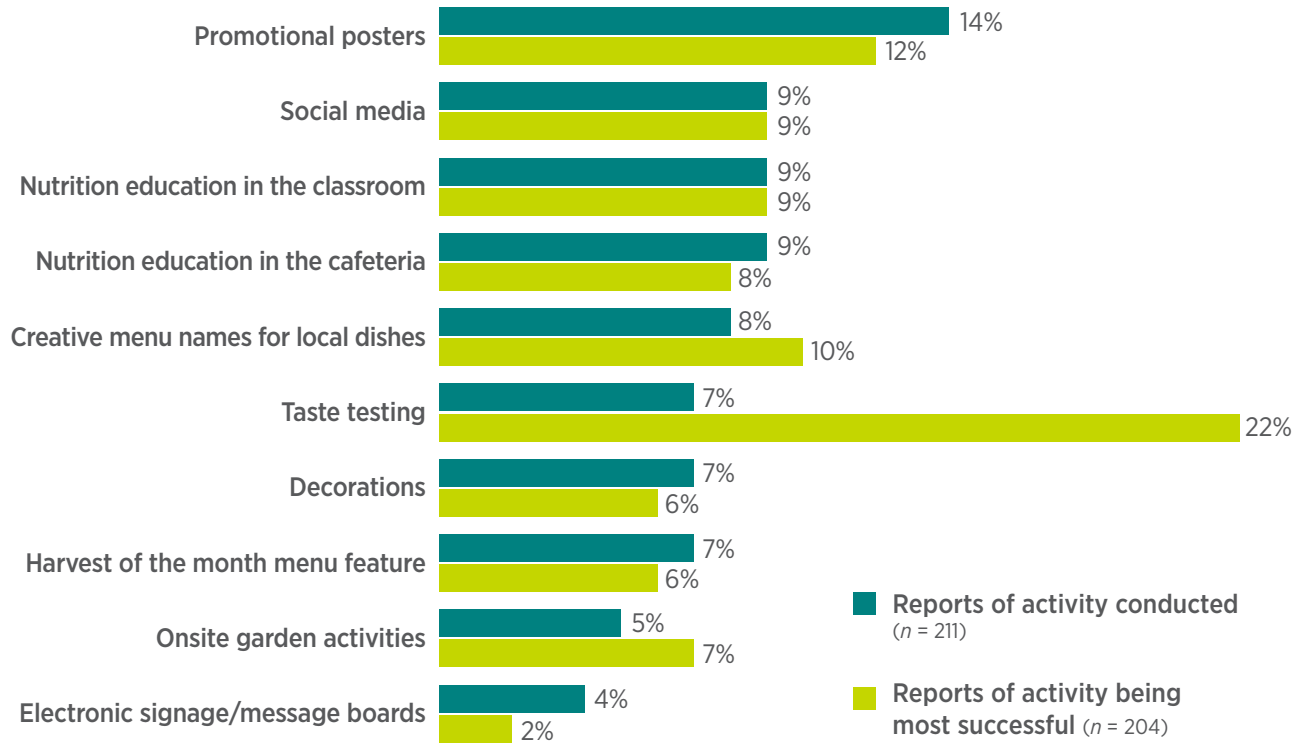


Figure 4: Promotional and Educational Activities Supporting 10 Cents by Number of Reports in 2021-2022



Food Preparation Methods

Food preparation methods at 10 Cents grantee sites may influence how FPMs use the program, so we asked FPMs about these methods in the first survey (October).

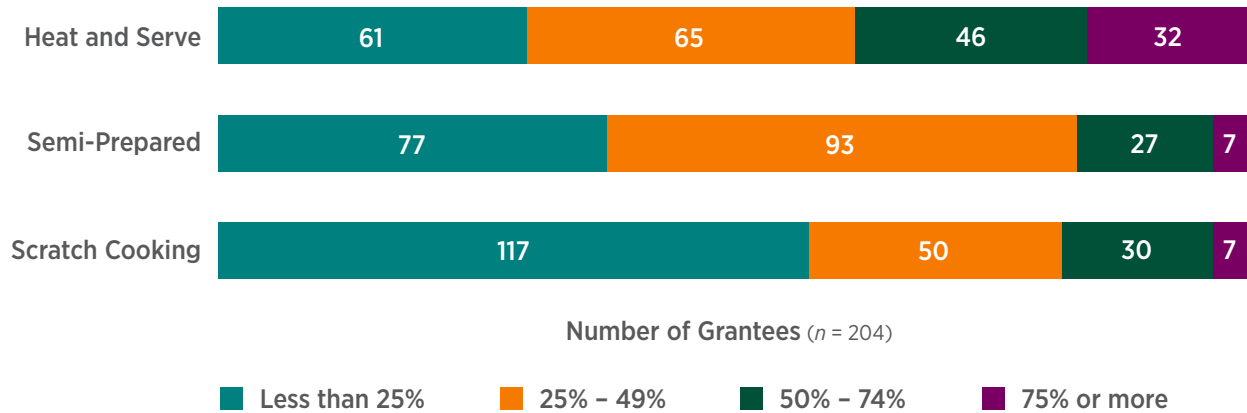
Specifically, FPMs were asked how much they used each of three meal preparations — heat and serve, semi-prepared, and scratch cooking, with an “other” option if needed¹³ — as part of their overall food service operation. We asked them to share this information out of 100 percent. “Other” was selected by 15 grantees, with the most common method reported as the use of cold, fresh, or uncooked methods such as a salad bar.

Of the 204 FPMs who responded to this question:

- **Heat and serve was the most commonly reported method**, with over a third of responding grantees (38%, 78 grantees) using this method for at least 50% of their food preparation;
- **Scratch cooking was the least commonly used method**, with the majority of grantees (57%, 117 grantees) using it for less than 25% of their food preparation; and
- **Semi-prepared methods were used for less than 50% of food preparation** by most grantees (83%, 170 grantees).

¹³ Related to food programs serving children, there are typically three types of food preparation methods: heat and serve methods use foods that are ready to eat and do not require additional preparation other than heating before serving; semi-prepared methods typically use a combination of processed and unprocessed foods that require some preparation prior to serving; and scratch cooking methods mainly use unprocessed foods and whole, fresh ingredients that require preparation prior to serving.

Figure 5: Reported Percentage Use of Meal Preparation Methods (out of 100%) by 10 Cents Grantees in 2021-2022



[We] have found they [the children] enjoy the vegetables when we make them from scratch and not from a can. It's rewarding to see them begin to embrace new foods when they sometimes have a history of disliking something.

— Early care and education grantee

Questions about meal preparation methods could help inform future evaluation related to differences in the ways grantees prepare Michigan-grown foods through their participation in the 10 Cents program.

Possible areas to explore, among many others, include the influence of scratch cooking on the consumption of local foods by children, and the influence of heat and serve methods on the purchasing of local foods by FPMs. This information could, in turn, be used to inform future training and education of food program personnel participating in 10 Cents.

Response of Food Program Staff to Purchasing and Serving Michigan-Grown Foods Through 10 Cents

Beyond FPMs, food program staff are critical to the growth and success of local food purchasing activities at 10 Cents schools, ECEs, and other sites.

In the last (August) evaluation survey, FPMs participating in 10 Cents were asked about how food program staff responded to the purchase and service of Michigan-grown throughout the program year. Of 257 grantees, 175 participating FPMs shared responses, which evaluators categorized as positive, negative, or neutral feedback.

- The majority of FPMs (90%, 157 grantees) reported a generally positive staff response to local foods for 10 Cents, but 11 FPMs (7%) stated their staff response was indifferent.
- Of the seven grantees who shared that their food program staff had a negative response to local foods for 10 Cents, six of them indicated that this was due to increased labor to prepare and serve local foods.



Staff has been tough to get buy in. They are not used to the additional prep work it takes to use fresh produce...

— Public school district grantee

Evaluators also categorized the FPMs' feedback regarding staff responses into themes. While many FPMs shared a general positive response among staff that did not specify a reason (100 grantees), some provided more detailed descriptions about a positive staff response including that they:

- **enjoyed new varieties** of local foods (18);
- **were excited to serve local foods** to children (13);
- **were satisfied with the taste or quality** of local foods (10);
- **had pride** in serving local foods (10); and
- **increased their knowledge** of preparing local foods as a result of the program (6).



There has been a learning curve for sure throughout the course of this program. My staff has grown immensely in their skill set and comfort level of preparing farm fresh produce.

— Public school district grantee (5 years of experience participating in 10 Cents)



At the beginning, baby steps was the win for us. Now, our employees cannot wait to see what comes in from the farms. They are eager and ready to prepare it.

— Public school district grantee (5 years of experience participating in 10 Cents)



Our staff is very excited to try new recipes with our [CSA] share each week. They have expanded their knowledge about the items we receive, and it has allowed them to be more creative with our monthly menus.

— Early care and education grantee (1 year of experience participating in 10 Cents)

Conclusion

Evaluation findings show there is a wide range of experience in purchasing and serving local foods among participating FPMs.

FPMs reported using at least one of the three typical meal preparation methods in their food service programs — heat and serve, semi-prepared methods and scratch cooking — showing FPMs can participate in 10 Cents with any type of meal preparation method. Throughout the year FPMs conducted a variety of promotional and educational activities such as taste testing, in addition to purchasing and serving meals with local foods. Lastly, FPMs shared that the majority of their food program staff, a key part of food program operation, had a positive reception to 10 Cents.

Different characteristics — such as the meal preparation methods and perceived motivators, barriers, and challenges — may influence their purchasing and service of local food through 10 Cents, but further investigation would be required to understand the extent to which and in what ways these characteristics influence everyday practice. Knowledge about participating food program managers is important for those administering the 10 Cents program as well as supporting partners so that they can provide appropriate resources to support grantees in their efforts to purchase and serve Michigan grown foods.

QUESTIONS FOR A 10 CENTS A MEAL GRANTEE:

Brent Bishop | Food Service Supervisor, Charlotte Public Schools

Charlotte Public Schools is a public school district located in Southern Michigan in Eaton County. During the 2021-2022 school year, there were over 2300 children enrolled in the district which includes preschool through 12th grade. Charlotte has been a 10 Cents a Meal grantee since 2020-2021 when the program went statewide for the first time. Brent Bishop is the district's Food Service Supervisor and manages the 10 Cents grant.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AS THE FOOD SERVICE SUPERVISOR?

I'm responsible for overseeing a dynamic food service team that serves over 2000 nutritious meals across our district. I'm proud of the hard work our team puts in to make this a reality each and every day!

WHAT ARE THE DAILY ACTIVITIES OF YOUR JOB?

I wear many hats! My primary responsibility is to work with my team to ensure we provide a seamless level of service to our district and partners while constantly looking for ways to elevate and improve upon what we do in a fiscally responsible manner. COVID-19 has been tough to navigate through, but the reality is it's provided many opportunities for school food service professionals to provide better food on our students' lunch trays!

HOW ARE YOU INVOLVED WITH 10 CENTS A MEAL?

I'm very "hands on" with the program. I feel you will only reap the rewards from this program if you are fully engaged. It takes a commitment to develop the relationships that make the program a success. When we were awarded this grant, I assembled some of our key staff members and challenged them to help us develop relationships with local farms. I was pleasantly surprised to have tremendous buy-in from my team, which resulted in identifying suitable farm families for us to partner with.

We've been able to use the funding to purchase local foods to support a variety of our programs throughout the district. Every student has seen local foods offered to them at breakfast, lunch and a few of our afterschool programming initiatives.



Photo Credit:
Brent Bishop

HOW HAS 10 CENTS CHANGED YOUR PROGRAM?

The apples we serve make a short 9-mile trip from the farm to our cafeterias. This helps reduce our carbon footprint and keeps those dollars in our county, supporting local farm families! And this past January we were able to partner with a like-minded organization to supply us with lettuce that comes from the farm to our tables within three days! I know some chefs that would give their right arm to get that type of high-quality produce during the winter months in Michigan! If it was not for this program, we would not have been able to cultivate this relationship!

- **Positive:** Supporting local farm families, reducing our carbon footprint and offering nutritious items that we can tell a story about is a big deal for us at CPS!
- **Negative:** The reporting we've had to provide was a little challenging, but Wendy and her team were able to navigate us through that process.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE FOR THE FUTURE OF 10 CENTS?

I think the program has made tremendous strides and it will only get better as more of our peer institutions get involved. The local food initiative for schools in Michigan is really picking up steam, "persistence breaks resistance" and it seems like next year will be even better!

ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT YOUR DISTRICT'S EXPERIENCE WITH 10 CENTS A MEAL?

Two things. Thank you for making this a possibility, it's been a win-win for our local farm families and CPS. And I'd encourage anyone who's considering applying for the 10 Cents a Meal program to do so! Start small, the people involved are passionate about local foods and will go out of their way to give you the tools to be successful at serving more local foods!

Evaluation of 10 Cents is led by the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS). The work presented here is part of the *10 Cents a Meal 2021-2022 evaluation results: Amplifying Impact with More Michigan Farms and Foods* by Megan McManus and Colleen Matts, CRFS, and with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and 10 Cents administrative funds for partner organizations.

To learn more, visit tencentsmichigan.org, foodsystems.msu.edu/10-cents-a-meal, and mifarmtoschool.msu.edu.

