



SECTION 24

# Does the Food Service Operation Type Influence How Public School Districts Use the Program?

10 Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids and Farms (10 Cents), administered by the Michigan Department of Education, matches what participating schools, districts, and early care and education centers spend on Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans with grants of up to 10 cents per meal.

This brief is part of *10 Cents a Meal 2020–2021 Evaluation Results: Expanded Eligibility Increased Impacts*.

## Key Takeaways

Grantees with self-operated food service programs reported **slightly more new foods tried (4.9) and foods they wanted to try but were unable to find or buy (2.5)** than grantees with contracted food service management companies (FSMCs) (4.3 and 1.2, respectively).



### NEW CONNECTIONS

Grantees with contracted FSMCs more frequently affirmed that 10 Cents allowed them to make **new connections** because of the program (54%) than grantees with self-operated programs (47%).



### IMPROVED RELATIONSHIPS

Grantees with self-operated programs more frequently affirmed that 10 Cents allowed them to **improve relationships with farms and food suppliers** (67%) than grantees with contracted FSMCs (57%).



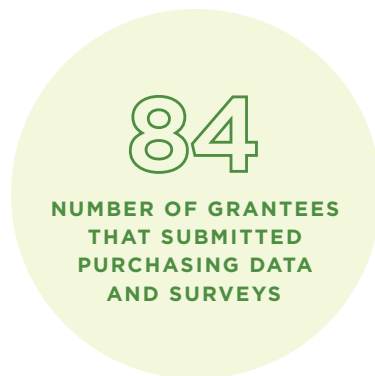
### MORE MARKET CHANNELS

Grantees with self-operated food service programs purchased their Michigan-grown products from **more market channels** on average (eight) than grantees with contracted FSMCs (five).

**As stated in the previous summary, evaluators wanted to explore how key characteristics of public school district grantees may influence their use the 10 Cents a Meal for Michigan’s Kids and Farms (10 Cents) program.** Data examined included responses from all four evaluation surveys (February, April, June, and August 2021) and the grantee-reported purchases of Michigan-grown foods. This analysis is not generalizable because it only includes the public school district grantees that submitted both purchasing data and survey responses (84 of the 113 public school district grantees). However, as more grantees participate in the program and more data are collected, analyses may show significant differences in program usage between those with different types of food service programs.

Data reported by grantees suggests that there may be differences between public school district grantees in their use of 10 Cents and their type of food service program. The 84 public school district grantees who submitted purchasing data and responded to surveys had two different types of food service programs: self-operated (43 grantees, 51%) and FSMCs (41 grantees, 49%). The full distribution of public school district grantees with key program characteristics for comparison can be seen in Table 24.1.

**Grantees with self-operated food service programs reported more Michigan-grown foods tried for the first time.**



Grantees with self-operated food service programs reported more Michigan-grown foods tried for the first time (4.9) and more foods they wanted to try but were unable to find or buy (2.5) than grantees with contracted FSMCs. Perhaps grantees with self-operated programs have a greater desire to incorporate local foods in their menus and/or the autonomy to do so.

Both grantees with self-operated and contracted FSMCs reported an average of three outcomes achieved from participating in the program. Except for two outcome statements, the percent of grantees who agreed to the outcomes was similar between types. There was a greater percentage of grantees

with self-operated programs who agreed to the statements “we have better support for our food service program from the community” and “marketing menus is easier” (28% and 20%, respectively) than grantees with contracted FSMCs (12% and 4%, respectively).

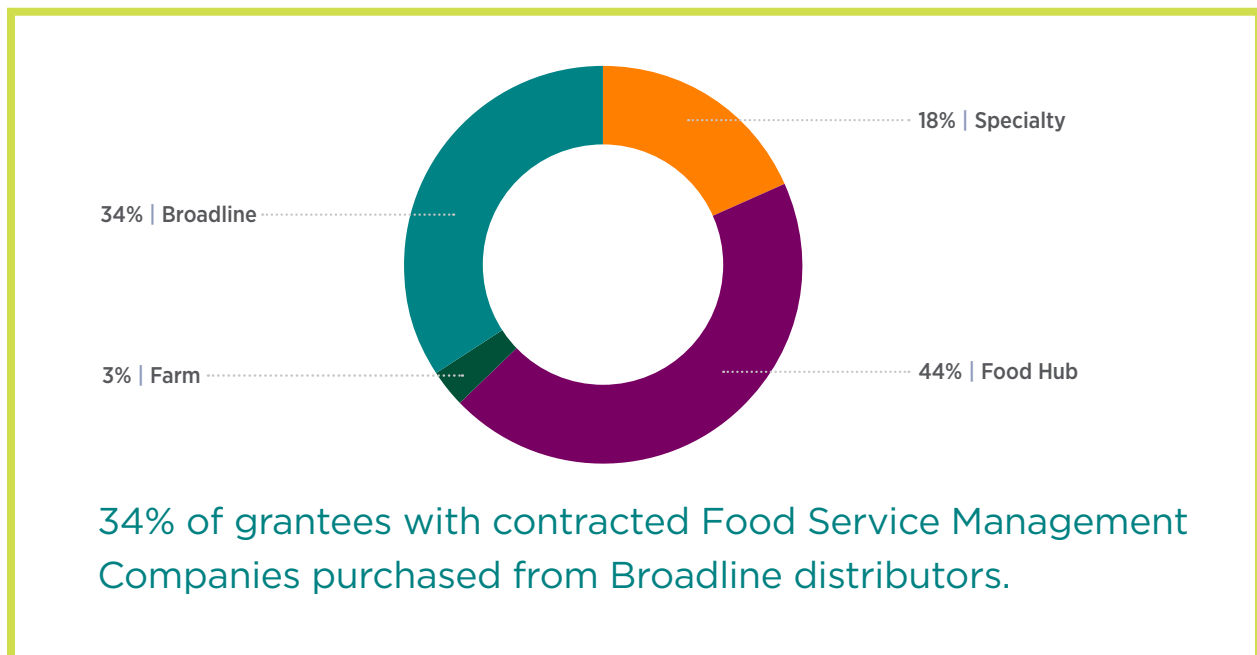
Grantees with self-operated programs more frequently affirmed that 10 Cents allowed them to improve relationships with farms and food suppliers (67%) and less frequently affirmed that 10 Cents allowed them to make new connections with farms and food suppliers because of the program (47%). Grantees with self-operated programs may be more likely to have established farmer and/or supplier relationships that work well for their food service program, but these relationships could still be improved. Given the stricter rules and guidelines for purchasing (e.g., using approved vendors) that contracted FSMCs require, grantees with these types of operations may be less likely to have established farmer and/or supplier relationships when they come into the 10 Cents program and are therefore more likely to form new relationships because of their participation.

**Grantees with self-operated food service programs made the remaining 51% of total public school district reported purchases on Michigan-grown products through eight different market channels.**

Grantees with contracted FSMCs spent 49% of all public school districts' reported purchases of Michigan-grown products (in dollars), and as a group, they purchased these products through five different market channels. They used food hubs (44% of contracted program purchases) more than any other market channel followed by broadline distributors (34% of contracted program purchases) and specialty distributors (18% of contracted program purchases). This may show that these grantees are both motivated and ready to use a local food supplier such as a food hub if it is an approved vendor through their FSMC. Some of these grantees also reported purchases direct from farms (3% of contracted FSMC purchases) and food processors (1% of contracted FSMC purchases).

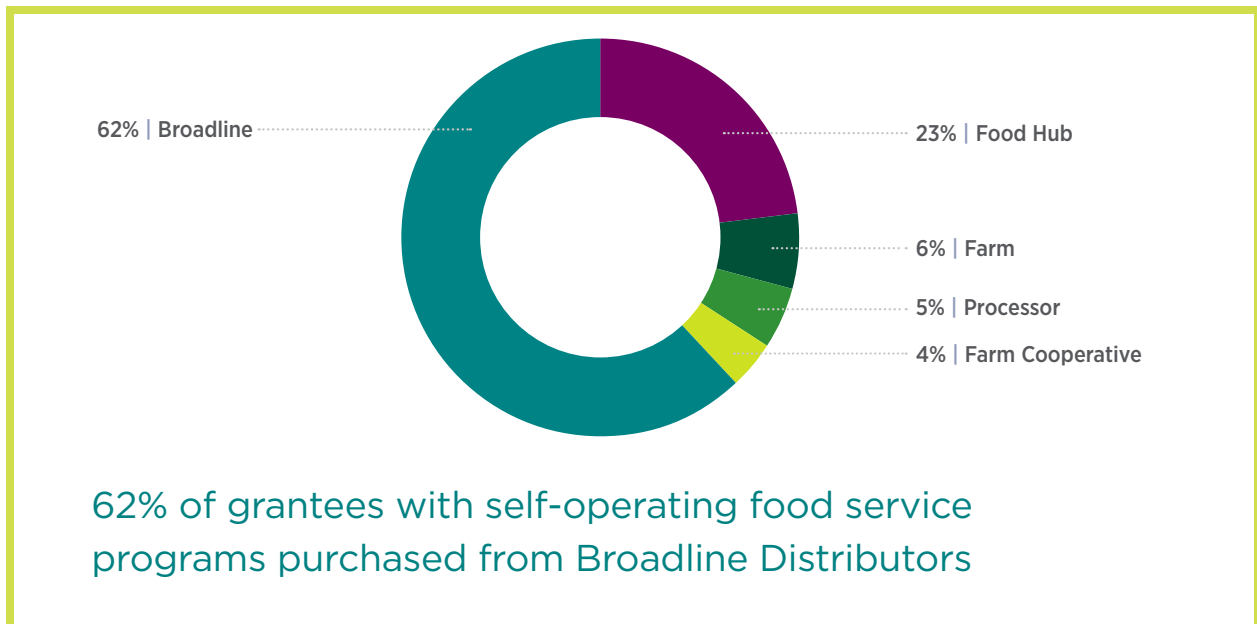
Grantees with self-operated food service programs made the remaining 51% of total public school district reported purchases on Michigan-grown products through eight different market channels. Purchasing through three more market channels than the group of grantees with contracted FSMCs may support the idea that grantees with self-operated programs, as a group, have greater flexibility in choosing suppliers for their local food purchases. They used broadline distributors most (62% of self-operated purchases), followed by food hubs (23% of self-operated purchases). They also purchased direct from farms (6% of self-operated purchases), food processors (5% of self-operated purchases), and farmer cooperatives (4% of self-operated purchases). Less than 1% of their total purchases were from farmers markets, specialty distributors, and grocery stores. A comparison of market channels used by grantees with self-operated food service programs and those with contracted FSMCs is shown in Figure 24.1 below.

**Figure 24.1. Grantees with Contracted Food Service Management Companies' Percent Spending by Market Channel**



Note:  $n = 41$ . Because purchases from farmers markets, specialty distributors and grocery stores make up 1% or less of total spending, these purchases were omitted.

**Figure 24.2. Grantees with Self-Operating Food Service Programs' Percent Spending by Market Channel**



Note:  $n = 44$ . Because purchases from processors make up 1% or less of total spending, these purchases were omitted.

When grantees were examined individually and not as a group, those with self-operated and contracted FSMCs had similar averages for the number of different vendors and market channels used and for different types of products purchased. An average of 3.5 farms of origin were reported per grantee for their purchased products, and each used an average of two market channels. Grantees with contracted FSMCs purchased an average of eight different products per grantee, and self-operated grantees purchased an average of nine different products per grantee.



More than half of all grantees **built new connections** to and **improved relationships** with farmers and food vendor through the 10 cents program.

**Table 24.1. Characteristics of Public School District Grantees and Their Food Service Operation Type**

	Average reported number per grantee over the program year	
	Contracted food service management companies (n = 41, 49%)	Self-operated food programs (n = 43, 51%)
Different types of Michigan-grown foods tried for the first time	4.3	4.9
Different types of Michigan-grown foods of interest	1.2	2.5
Outcomes of 10 Cents participation	2.9	3.1
Percent of total reported purchases by all public school grantees	49%	51%
Different types of products purchased	8	9
Farms of origin for products purchased	3.5	3.5
Market channels used for products purchased	2	2

	Percent of grantees who affirmed the statement as a result of participating in 10 Cents	
New connections to farmers and food vendors	54%	47%
Improved relationships with farmers and food vendors	57%	67%

Note: n = 84. Response rates vary for each question, and more information can be found in the [Technical Notes](#) section of the full report.

Evaluation of 10 Cents is led by the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS). The work presented here is part of *10 Cents a Meal 2020–2021 Evaluation Results: Expanded Eligibility Increased Impacts* by Colleen Matts and Megan McManus of CRFS and was generously funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and 10 Cents administrative funds for partner organizations.

To learn more, visit [tencentsmichigan.org](https://tencentsmichigan.org), [foodsystems.msu.edu/10-cents-a-meal](https://foodsystems.msu.edu/10-cents-a-meal), and [mifarmtoschool.msu.edu](https://mifarmtoschool.msu.edu).

