

Sustaining Momentum for Michigan's Future

10 CENTS A MEAL 2022-2023
EVALUATION RESULTS



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MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Center for
Regional Food Systems



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For more information about 10 Cents a Meal, visit tencentsmichigan.org. For more information about 10 Cents a Meal evaluation, see canr.msu.edu/10-cents-a-meal, and to learn more about farm to school in Michigan, visit mifarmtoschool.msu.edu. Contact Megan McManus, Farm to Institution Specialist, at mcmanu60@msu.edu or May Tsupros, Director of Farm to Institution Programs, at tsupros1@msu.edu for questions about this evaluation.

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2022–2023 10 CENTS A MEAL GRANTEES

A&W Day Care Center	Charlton Heston Academy	Elk Rapids Schools
A School for the Mind and Body GSRP Program	Cheboygan Area Schools	Empowered Community Outreach Services
Academy of Warren	Chelsea School District	Escanaba Area Public Schools
Airport Community Schools	Clare Public Schools	Essexville-Hampton Public Schools
Alcona Community Schools	Clare United Methodist Preschool & Child Care Center	Farmington Public School District
Allen Park Public Schools	Clawson Public Schools	Farwell Area Schools
Alma Public Schools	Clio Area School District	Fenton Area Public Schools
Alpena Public Schools	Coldwater Community Schools	Ferndale Public Schools
American International Academy	Coloma Community Schools	Flint Cultural Center Academy
Ann Arbor Public Schools	Comstock Park Public Schools	Flint, School District of the City of
Association for Child Development	Comstock Public Schools	Frankfort-Elberta Area Schools
Avondale School District	Concord Community Schools	Fremont Public School District
Battle Creek Public Schools	Constantine Public School District	Fruitport Community Schools
Baxter Community Center Inc	Coopersville Area Public School District	George Washington Carver Academy
Bay City Academy	Corunna Public Schools	Glen Lake Community Schools
Beaverton Schools	Countryside Academy	Godfrey-Lee Public Schools
Bedford Public Schools	Covert Public Schools	Godwin Heights Public Schools
Bendle Public Schools	Crossroads Charter Academy	Goodrich Area Schools
Benzie County Central Schools	Croswell-Lexington Community Schools	Grand Rapids Metropolitan YMCA
Big Bay de Noc School District	Dearborn Heights School District #7	Grand Rapids Public Schools
Bloomfield Hills Schools	Decatur Public Schools	Grass Lake Community Schools
Bloomington Public School District	Delton Kellogg Schools	Greenville Public Schools
Boyer Falls Public School District	Detroit Public Schools Community District	Grosse Pointe Public Schools
Bridgeport-Spaulding Community School District	DeWitt Public Schools	Gull Lake Community Schools
Bright Light Early Care & Education	Dexter Community School District	Hancock Public Schools
Carsonville-Port Sanilac School District	Dundee Community Schools	Hannahville Indian Community
Center Line Public Schools	East Lansing School District	Hanover-Horton School District
Central Lake Public Schools	Eaton Rapids Public Schools	Harbor Springs School District
Charlotte Public Schools	Edwardsburg Public Schools	Harper Creek Community Schools

2022–2023 10 CENTS A MEAL GRANTEES

Harper Woods, The School District of the City of Harrison Community Schools

Hart Public School District

Haslett Public Schools

Hazel Park, School District of the City of Hemlock Public School District

Hesperia Community Schools

Hillsdale Community Schools

Holland City School District

Holton Public Schools

Holy Name School

Hopkins Public Schools

Houghton Lake Community Schools

Houghton-Portage Township School District

Huron School District

Inland Lakes Schools

Ionia Public Schools

Ishpeming Public School District No. 1

Ithaca Public Schools

Jackson Public Schools

Jefferson Schools (Monroe)

Jenison Public Schools

Kalamazoo Public Schools

Kenowa Hills Public Schools

Kent County Juvenile Detention

Keys Grace Academy

Kids Time Inc

Kingsley Area Schools

Kingston Community School District

L'Anse Creuse Public Schools

Lake Fenton Community Schools

Lake Shore Public Schools (Macomb)

Lakewood Public Schools

Lamphere Public Schools

Lansing Catholic High School

Lansing Public School District

Lapeer Community Schools

Leland Public School District

Lincoln Park, School District of the City of Linden Community Schools

Lowell Area Schools

Mancelona Public Schools

Manchester Community Schools

Manistee Area Public Schools

Mar Lee School District

Marcellus Community Schools

Mason County Eastern Schools

Mason Public Schools (Ingham)

Mattawan Consolidated School

Meridian Public Schools

Michigan Center School District

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

Michigan School for the Deaf and Blind

Mid-Michigan Leadership Academy

Midland Public Schools

Milan Area Schools

Mildred C. Wells Preparatory Academy

Millington Community Schools

Mona Shores Public School District

Montague Area Public Schools

Montrose Community Schools

Morley Stanwood Community Schools

Mt. Morris Consolidated Schools

Mt. Pleasant City School District

Muskegon Area Intermediate School District

Muskegon Heights Public School Academy System

Muskegon, Public Schools of the City of Napoleon Community Schools

Negaunee Public Schools

New Branches Charter Academy

New Buffalo Area Schools

Newaygo Public School District

Niles Community Schools

North Muskegon Public Schools

Northport Public School District

Oak Park, School District of the City of Old Redford Academy

Olivet Community Schools

Orchard View Schools

Otsego Public Schools

Our Savior Lutheran School

Owosso Public Schools

Parchment School District

Paw Paw Public School District

Pellston Public Schools

Pinconning Area Schools

Plainwell Community Schools

Public Schools of Petoskey

Quincy Community Schools

Ravenna Public Schools

Redford Union Schools, District No. 1

2022–2023 10 CENTS A MEAL GRANTEES

Reed City Area Public Schools	Standish-Sterling Community Schools	Washtenaw Intermediate School District
Reese Public Schools	Stockbridge Community Schools	Waverly Community Schools
Reeths-Puffer Schools	Sturgis Public Schools	Wayland Union Schools
Richfield Public School Academy	Summerfield Schools	Wayne-Westland Community School District
Richmond Community Schools	Superior Central School District	Wedgwood Christian Services
Rogers City Area Schools	Suttons Bay Public Schools	West Bloomfield School District
Romulus Community Schools	Swan Valley School District	West Branch-Rose City Area Schools
Royal Oak Schools	Thornapple Kellogg School District	West Catholic High School
Saginaw, School District of the City of Saline Area Schools	Traverse City Area Public Schools	West Iron County Public Schools
Saugatuck Public Schools	Tri County Area Schools	West Ottawa Public School District
Sault Ste. Marie Area Schools	Tri County Council for Child Development	White Cloud Public Schools
Schoolcraft Community Schools	Trinity Lutheran School	Whitehall District Schools
Shelby Public Schools	Troy School District	Whitmore Lake Public School District
South Haven Public Schools	Union City Community Schools	Whittemore-Prescott Area Schools
Southfield Public School District	Utica Community Schools	Wolverine Community School District
Sparta Area Schools	Van Buren Public Schools	Wyoming Public Schools
Spring Lake Public Schools	Van Dyke Public Schools	Young Child Associates
St. Clair County RESA	Vanderbilt Area Schools	Ypsilanti Community Schools
St. Francis High School	Village of Shiny Stars Child Care Center	YWCA Children’s Center
St. Joseph Public Schools	Walker Child Care	Zeeland Public Schools

We thank all the family day care home providers and childcare centers who participated in the 10 Cents a Meal pilot through the Association for Child Development.



Overview

10 Cents a Meal is a state-funded program that matches what participating schools and other non-school sponsors (ONSR) spend on fresh or minimally processed Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans.¹

The goals of the program are to improve daily nutrition and eating habits for Michigan children and invest in Michigan's agriculture and local food business economy. Since the pilot program first began in 2016–2017, the number of children that grantees reach and the total dollar value of grants awarded have grown over time, as illustrated in the table below.

Table 1. 10 Cents a Meal Grant Distribution, 2016–2023

Year	Total grants awarded	Eligible regions ^a	Counties	Grantees	Estimated students ^b	Estimated children ^c
2022–2023	\$5,637,000	Statewide	65	240	587,490	4,936
2021–2022	\$2,027,100	Statewide	57	257	570,504	15,696
2020–2021	\$1,410,700	Statewide	48	148	423,879	11,683
2018–2019	\$493,500	Prosperity Regions 2, 4, 6, 8, 9	27	57	134,000	—
2017–2018	\$315,000	Prosperity Regions 2, 4, 9	18	32	95,000	—
2016–2017	\$210,000	Prosperity Regions 2, 4	8	16	48,000	—

Note: While the 10 Cents a Meal program did proceed in 2019–2020, this year is not included in the chart above because it operated differently due to legislative and pandemic-related delays, including to state funding. 10 Cents a Meal grants were not made available until August, when the traditional school year was already complete, and only previous grantees were invited to participate in this unique year.

a In prior years, the 10 Cents a Meal pilot program referenced Prosperity Regions as used by Governor Rick Snyder's administration.

b Data were supplied by the MDE. Most student data for nonpublic schools and residential child care institutions (RCCI) are not publicly available, so they are not included in this chart. For some nonpublic schools, average monthly enrollment from 2022 to 2023 lunch claims were used in lieu of Center for Educational Performance and Information's (CEPI) enrollment counts.

c Data were supplied by the MDE. License capacity estimates a childcare or community feeding site sponsor's maximum number of children served, and it includes capacity for all possible sites under each grantee.

¹ The USDA [Geographic Preference](#) definition of minimally processed includes products that have not been cooked, heated, canned, or do not contain any additives or fillers.

HOW 10 CENTS A MEAL GRANTING WORKS

The MDE continues to administer the program with additional support from a core team consisting of staff members from the nonprofit Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, MDARD, and CRFS.

Eligible applicants selected by MDE receive 10 Cents a Meal grants through a competitive application process.² Applications are evaluated on the applicant's capacity to purchase, serve, and market Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans in their food programs. Similar to previous years, other characteristics are also considered in the application review and selection process, such as the ability to provide related educational and promotional activities, free and reduced-price meal rates for school applicants (when applicable), and the geographic distribution of grantees. For the 2022–2023 year, all applicants who applied to the program were awarded.

10 Cents a Meal reimburses grantees for 50% of the cost of eligible Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans up to their maximum grant. For example, if a grantee is awarded a \$5,000 grant, they are expected to submit \$10,000 worth of purchasing information for Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans to receive the full \$5,000 grant. Reimbursements are issued after participating food program managers (FPMs) respond to surveys and submit purchase data, which are reviewed and validated by MDE staff.

Legislation for 10 Cents a Meal requires grantees to report the name and county of the Michigan farm that grew the food product reported for reimbursement.³ Eligible Michigan-grown produce can be sourced from any vendor, including farms and other local food suppliers, such as federally funded programs like the Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. This flexibility in allowable sources can help promote local foods across all market channels, including through customary school food suppliers and government-funded food programs, which many grantees already use. In addition to submitting purchasing information for local foods, grantees were also required to complete evaluation surveys about their purchasing, serving, and promotion of local foods through 10 Cents a Meal.



10 Cents a Meal reimburses grantees for 50% of the cost of eligible Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans up to their maximum grant.

² Eligible applicants of 10 Cents a Meal include all sponsors of a federal child nutrition program in Michigan.

³ [State of Michigan Public Act 144 of 2022](#).

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Evaluation provides insight into the program’s progress toward legislative goals and its impact, but the program data is still limited to evaluation survey responses and purchasing information provided by FPMs. There is still much to learn about the full scope of the program’s impact on grantee food programs, the children reached through them, and Michigan farms and food businesses participating in the 10 Cents a Meal supply chain.

Evaluation Surveys

Evaluation of the program is led by 10 Cents a Meal partner CRFS. As in previous years, CRFS staff developed and administered electronic evaluation surveys through Qualtrics that were distributed to participating FPMs via email by MDE staff. Due to administrative delays with finalizing a new purchase submission system, grantees were not officially accepted into the program until April 2023, although they could still submit purchase data purchases for reimbursement starting September 2022. For this program year, the first survey was administered to grantees in May, and the second and final survey was administered in August. For more information, refer to the “Technical Notes” in the [**Appendices for Sustaining Momentum for Michigan’s Future: 2022–2023 10 Cents a Meal Evaluation Report.**](#)

To maintain consistency in evaluation and to allow for more rigorous analyses of responses across years in the future, similar questions are asked across program years. Question types range from multiple choice to written, open responses. Some questions were asked of FPMs in every survey, including the following related to their 10 Cents a Meal activities:

- **Michigan-grown foods served** in the food program for the first time;
- **Michigan-grown foods they wanted to use** but could not find and buy;
- **promotional and educational activities** implemented in the school or childcare setting to support Michigan-grown foods (to the best of their knowledge); and
- **open responses for needs and feedback** (positive and negative) related to participating in the program.

Other questions were designed to capture specific information during the program year. For instance, the first survey includes some baseline questions to gauge FPMs’ experience, motivations, and perceived barriers with purchasing and serving local foods. For more information about the survey questions and their respective response rates, please refer to the [**Appendices for Sustaining Momentum for Michigan’s Future: 2022–2023 10 Cents a Meal Evaluation Report.**](#)

DEMOGRAPHIC AND PURCHASE DATA

Program administrators at MDE supply extensive data (when available) for schools and other non-school sponsors (ONSR) participating in 10 Cents a Meal to help us understand children potentially reached and served by the program. This includes data from MDE and the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) for K–12 enrollment, lunch claim enrollments, free and reduced priced meal counts, as well as license capacities for some childcare centers. The license capacity is an early care and education (ECE) site’s maximum number of children served, and it includes all possible sites or locations under the management of each grantee. Demographics for K–12 schoolchildren, including race and ethnicity, are sourced from the [**MI School Data**](#)’s website, Michigan’s official education data source.

Purchase data is also supplied by MDE, and that data is reported by grantees through an online reporting system. Grantees self-report their purchases of Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables,

The findings shared in this report are representative of only 181 grantees; not all the 240 grantees participating in the 2022–2023 program provided information about their food purchases.

and dry beans for 10 Cents a Meal reimbursement, including the product, cost, its farm and county of origin, and additional vendors and suppliers to get the product from the farm to the grantee.

It should be noted that there are some limitations with purchase data. The findings shared in this report are representative of only 181 grantees; not all the 240 grantees participating in the 2022–2023 program provided information about their food purchases.

Like previous years, there were instances in which errors in purchase submissions by some grantees, as determined by MDE staff review, resulted in overall underreporting of the total dollars spent on foods. Additionally, FPMs may not always have the capacity to report every transaction, or they may have also received incomplete product and farm-of-origin information from some suppliers, such as through their traditional school food suppliers.⁴ These instances can result in data that may underrepresent the actual number of purchases, total farms, and total Michigan-grown foods purchased during the year. Last, FPMs may purchase more Michigan-grown products than their grant award plus match dollar amount. This could even include Michigan-grown or raised products that are not eligible for 10 Cents a Meal, such as dairy, eggs, meat, honey, or grains, so the potential impact that 10 Cents a Meal participation can have on local food purchasing may extend beyond our evaluation data.

STRUCTURE OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

This report begins with an overview of the 10 Cents a Meal program, including how it works and our evaluation activities. In the following summaries, we share evaluation findings starting with who was involved in the program:

- **10 Cents a Meal grantees** and their respective FPMs.
- **Children reached** through the program and served Michigan-grown foods.
- **Michigan farmers and food business operators** who supply Michigan-grown foods to 10 Cents a Meal grantees and their food programs serving children.

These findings are followed by summaries about the Michigan-grown foods purchased and served through 10 Cents a Meal and a summary that reflects on how the program worked to reach its goals. The report concludes with a summary of recommendations for evaluation purposes and the practice of the program going forward. Supplemental resources, such as the “Technical Notes,” are available separately from this report in the [**Appendices for Sustaining Momentum for Michigan’s Future: 2022–2023 10 Cents a Meal Evaluation Report**](#).

Throughout the report, the voices of participating FPMs, suppliers, and community members are represented through feedback from evaluation surveys during the program year. The report also includes abbreviated highlights of interviews conducted by partners from Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities. The full versions of these interviews are included in the stories featured through the [**Who’s Feeding Our Kids**](#) series on the 10 Cents a Meal website.

⁴ Refer to the summary “[**Michigan Farmers and Vendors Participating in the 10 Cents a Meal Supply Chain**](#)” for more information about sourcing information from suppliers.

Children Reached Through 10 Cents a Meal: Geographic Distribution and Demographics

A key group directly engaged in the 10 Cents a Meal program includes the children reached through the program and served Michigan-grown foods. They are intended to be one of the primary beneficiaries of the program, in addition to farmers and food suppliers.

This was the first year that evaluators used the three categories to define types of 10 Cents a Meal grantees: schools, sponsors of community feeding sites, and childcare sponsors. If a grantee participated in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), then they were categorized as a school in this report. If a grantee did not participate in NSLP but participated in either the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-Risk Afterschool Meals or Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), then they were categorized as a sponsor of community feeding sites. If a grantee did not participate in the NSLP, At-Risk After School, or SFSP but participated in CACFP, then they were categorized as a childcare sponsor. These changes were made to help better define grantee types based on the types of food programs that serve specific audiences of children.

- In the 2022–2023 10 Cents a Meal program, **participants included 240 grantees comprising 224 schools, 14 childcare sponsors, and two sponsors of community feeding sites.** Collectively, grantees served over 592,000 children in 65 different Michigan counties.
- **In schools, an estimated 587,490 K–12 schoolchildren could have been reached by grantees and benefited from the program.** This amounts to 41% of all K–12 schoolchildren in Michigan (1,437,279) the same year, an increase from the previous program year (570,504 children reached in 2020–2021).
- **Fourteen childcare sponsors and two sponsors of community feeding sites participated in the program and likely reached 4,936 young children.** This also included children reached through 59 childcare centers and family day care home providers participating in a 10 Cents a Meal pilot program with their CACFP sponsoring organization.
- Because enrollment information for some participating school grantees such as residential child care institutions (RCCIs) and nonpublic schools are not publicly available, **the total number of children reached through 10 Cents a Meal is higher than what is presented** in this summary.

The table below shows 10 Cents a Meal grant awards by region using the State of Michigan Prosperity Regions,⁵ the grantee type, and children reached in the 2022–2023 year. Total children served includes K–12 school enrollment and license capacity for ECE sites. License capacity is the maximum number of children a site is licensed by the state or local licensing agency to serve at any one time, so it may be an overestimate of actual children served at any given time.

Table 2. Regional Breakdown of 10 Cents a Meal Grant Awards for 2022–2023

Prosperity Region	Counties	Grantee			Total K–12 children enrollment	ECE license capacity	Total children served
		School	Community feeding	Childcare			
1	7	10	1	—	10,156	288	10,444
2	7	17	—	—	22,629	—	22,629
3	8	11	—	—	11,693	—	11,693
4	12	51	1	3	129,054	2,114	131,168
5	8	17	—	1	34,928	37	34,965
6	6	21	—	—	34,731	—	34,731
7	3	14	—	1	33,138	1,122	34,260
8	7	27	—	5	57,863	1,103	58,966
9	4	21	—	—	57,410	—	57,410
10	3	35	—	4	195,889	272	196,161

Note: For school grantees that are nonpublic schools and RCCIs, most student data are not publicly available, so they are not included in this chart, although in some instances average monthly enrollment from 2022 lunch claims were used in lieu of CEPI enrollment counts. For more information about how data from the state of Michigan were calculated, visit the “Technical Notes” in the [Appendices for Sustaining Momentum for Michigan’s Future: 2022–2023 10 Cents a Meal Evaluation Report](#).

As seen in the chart below, some high level findings of the K–12 population of schoolchildren reached through 10 Cents a Meal grants can be described as follows:⁶

- Overall, 10 Cents a Meal grantees reached a higher percentage of African American (21.0%) schoolchildren than the total percentage of the statewide population of African American schoolchildren (17.8%) and a lower percentage of White schoolchildren than the total statewide percentage of White schoolchildren (59.5% compared to 63.9%).
- Grantees in Prosperity Region 10 (southeast lower Michigan, including the city of Detroit and the Detroit metropolitan area) served the highest percentage of African American schoolchildren (40.7%).

⁵ Refer to the [State of Michigan Prosperity Regions](#) map for more information.

⁶ The following race and ethnicity categories presented below are from K–12 student data sourced from the [MI School Data](#) website.

- **10 Cents a Meal grantees served a slightly higher percentage of Hispanic/Latinx schoolchildren (10.4%)** than the total percentage of the statewide population of Hispanic/Latinx schoolchildren (8.9%).
- **Grantees in Prosperity Region 1 (Upper Peninsula) served the highest percentage of American Indian/Native American schoolchildren (9.6%).**
- **The percentage of schoolchildren eligible for free and reduced-price meals in 10 Cents a Meal schools and districts was one percentage point higher** than that of all Michigan schoolchildren (54.9% compared to 53.9%).

Table 3. Demographics of K–12 Michigan Students Reached Through 10 Cents a Meal Grants for 2022–2023

	Prosperity region										School grantees	Total state enrollment
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Aggregate enrollment	9,566	20,975	11,634	113,926	33,875	33,574	32,342	57,355	56,295	193,169	562,711	1,377,749
African American (percent)	1.0%	0.9%	0.6%	9.5%	13.5%	10.6%	17.9%	15.0%	10.5%	40.7%	21.0%	17.8%
American Indian/ Alaska Native (percent)	9.6%	2.1%	0.6%	0.3%	0.9%	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%	0.6%
Asian (percent)	1.1%	0.9%	0.3%	1.4%	1.4%	0.4%	3.5%	1.1%	5.1%	5.5%	3.2%	3.6%
Hispanic/Latino (percent)	1.9%	4.3%	2.6%	19.1%	7.3%	5.5%	13.3%	12.1%	7.2%	8.3%	10.4%	8.9%
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander (percent)	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Two or more races (percent)	4.2%	4.0%	4.7%	4.9%	4.2%	4.9%	8.5%	8.1%	7.9%	3.8%	5.3%	5.1%
White (percent)	82.1%	87.7%	91.1%	64.7%	72.3%	78.3%	56.4%	63.2%	69.1%	41.4%	59.5%	63.9%
Free and reduced-price meal eligibility (percent)	48.2%	43.2%	72.3%	58.6%	57.2%	57.1%	54.8%	56.6%	36.9%	57.7%	54.9%	53.9%

Note: K–12 student data were sourced from the [MI School Data](#) website, which uses the race and ethnicity categories as presented here. Data for some school grantees such as nonpublic schools and RCCIs are not publicly available, so they are not included in this chart.

DISCUSSION

Through these evaluation findings, we can see that 10 Cents a Meal is likely reaching and serving a wide range of children who participate in grantee food programs. 10 Cents a Meal's role in increasing access to healthy Michigan-grown foods is particularly important as Michigan continues to rank in the bottom half of states for child well-being, according to the *2023 KIDS COUNT® Data Book*.⁷

Findings from the *Data Book* show that there has been an increase in the percentage of Michigan children living in families where no parent had full-time, year-round employment from previous years (26% in 2019 to 32% in 2021), and 18% of Michigan children (377,000) were living in poverty in 2021. The *Data Book* also shares findings that children of color in Michigan continue to disproportionately face challenges to their well-being due to discriminatory policies and practices that have caused historical inequities. 10 Cents a Meal can serve as one way to help address diet-related obstacles by helping grantees serve higher quality meals to youth. For example, study findings show that improved diet quality in school food programs can lead to better health outcomes and improved academic performance,⁸ emphasizing the need for programs like 10 Cents a Meal.

Study findings show that improved diet quality in school food programs can lead to better health outcomes and improved academic performance⁸.

Over the years, there has been a tremendous increase in the total dollars awarded to grantees, and this investment has contributed to a steady growth in the total number of participating grantees. As the program continues to expand, it will be necessary to also identify who is not participating and why to ensure the program is reaching grantees as equitably as possible. Factors such as resource allocation or per-pupil funding for schools, supply chain infrastructure, and food service staff capacity could all influence a potential grantee's ability to participate in 10 Cents a Meal. Some of these factors are further explored in the following report, and these findings could help inform program administrators and other farm to program supporters to better serve grantees.

Future evaluation will continue to allow us to track the program's reach to children and explore who is benefiting from increased access to healthy Michigan-grown foods. This can encompass who and where the grants reach, including the regions most impacted by disparities, such as health and funding allocation. Through these findings, we can measure how 10 Cents a Meal is achieving one of its goals to improve daily nutrition and eating habits for children and to identify opportunities for increased support to help grantees serve more Michigan-grown foods to children across the state.

7 Refer to Annie E. Casey Foundation's *2023 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* and the Michigan League for Public Policy's release for more information.
8 Refer to "**Diet quality and academic performance**" by Florence, et al. (2008) in the *Journal of School Health*.



10 Cents a Meal Spotlight

Association for Child Development

Denise Meyer, Executive Director

The Association for Child Development (ACD) is a nonprofit organization that sponsors CACFP sites in Michigan and Illinois. The ACD is a 10 Cents a Meal grantee who is piloting the program among its childcare homes and centers. Click here to read the full news story, "[Who's Feeding Our Kids: Expanding 10 Cents a Meal's Reach to Child Care Providers](#)," by Melanie Tran of Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities.

What is your organization's role in implementing 10 Cents a Meal?

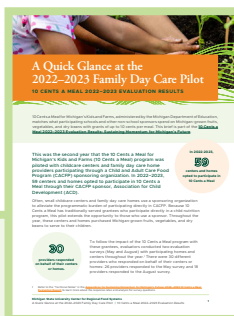
As a sponsor of the CACFP, our role is to ensure children in childcare receive healthy and nutritious meals. To help achieve this goal, we are participating in a pilot program with the 10 Cents a Meal grant offered to our childcare homes and centers. We provide extensive training and resources to our staff and providers to ensure that they are successful on the program and are aware of how to take advantage of the program's benefits. Additionally, we implement this grant as another opportunity to educate children, parents, and childcare workers about the benefits of eating fresh fruits and vegetables and the work it takes to get it from farm to table.

What impact has participating in the program had on the organization?

It has provided a wonderful partnership opportunity with 10 Cents a Meal, Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, and MSU. We have brought childcare to the table! The program was intended for schools, and we were the first sponsor of the CACFP to introduce 10 Cents a Meal to childcare homes. It aligns beautifully with our mission to teach children healthy eating habits to last a lifetime.

What are your future hopes and plans for participating in 10 Cents a Meal?

Our future hope is to have no cap on the number of providers who can participate. If they are sponsored by the CACFP, they should be able to participate. I would also love to see more home gardening as a result of the grant.



For evaluation findings through the childcare home and center pilot program, read the report [A Quick Glance at the 2022-2023 Family Day Care Pilot](#).

Food Program Managers and Staff Participating in 10 Cents a Meal

One of the main groups of people engaged directly in the 10 Cents a Meal program include FPMs at grantee sites. During the 2022–2023 program, there were 240 participating grantees across the state.

The majority of grantees were schools participating in the NSLP (89%), but other types of grantees also participated, including sponsors of community feeding sites⁹ and childcare sponsors,¹⁰ as seen in the table below. These changes were made to help better define grantee types based on the types of food programs they participated in during the year.

Table 4. 10 Cents a Meal Grantees by Type in 2022–2023

Grantee type	Number of grants
Schools	224
Childcare sponsors	14
Sponsors of community feeding sites	2
Total	240

FPM PURCHASING EXPERIENCE WITH MICHIGAN-GROWN FOODS

Previous evaluation findings have suggested that FPMs may purchase a greater diversity of Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans over time as they gain more experience participating in 10 Cents a Meal and other farm to program activities.¹¹ As more FPMs participate in 10 Cents a Meal, evaluators can use these survey responses to track findings over time, potentially including analysis related to foods they purchase and market channels they use.

FPMs who participated in the 2022–2023 year had varying years of experience participating in the program, purchasing local foods, and managing the food service program at their respective school district, community feeding site, or childcare site. Similar to previous years, there were some cases

9 If a grantee did not participate in NSLP but participated in either the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals or SFSP, then they were categorized as a community feeding site.

10 If a grantee did not participate in the NSLP, At-Risk After School, or SFSP, but participated in CACFP, then they were categorized as a childcare sponsor.

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*.

where FPMs working in schools and RCCIs managed more than one food service program across districts and therefore represented more than one grantee participating in 10 Cents a Meal. In 2022–2023, 15 FPMs managed food programs for exactly two different schools and districts. Additionally, these FPMs had varying years of experience managing each food program, so all responses on behalf of a grantee were counted in analysis.

This year, only one-third (34%) of grantees were new to 10 Cents a Meal, and this was a significant change from the previous year (2021–2022) when over half (58%) of all FPMs were new to the grant. For another third of FPMs (32%), this was the second year of participation. Similar to the previous year, seven grantees (3%) participated in 10 Cents a Meal for the maximum possible of 7 years because the first pilot program year began in 2016–2017 with 16 grantees in just two regions of the state. Since then, the program has grown rapidly, particularly following statewide expansion in 2020–2021. This trend can be seen in the table below with the majority of grantees coming from more recent years of the program with just 1–3 years of experience.

Table 5. Years of Participation in 10 Cents a Meal by Grantees in 2022–2023

Years of participation in 10 Cents a Meal	Number (percent) of Food Program Managers
1	81 (34%)
2	77 (32%)
3	39 (16%)
4	9 (4%)
5	15 (6%)
6	12 (5%)
7	7 (3%)

This year, only one-third (34%) of grantees were new to 10 Cents a Meal.

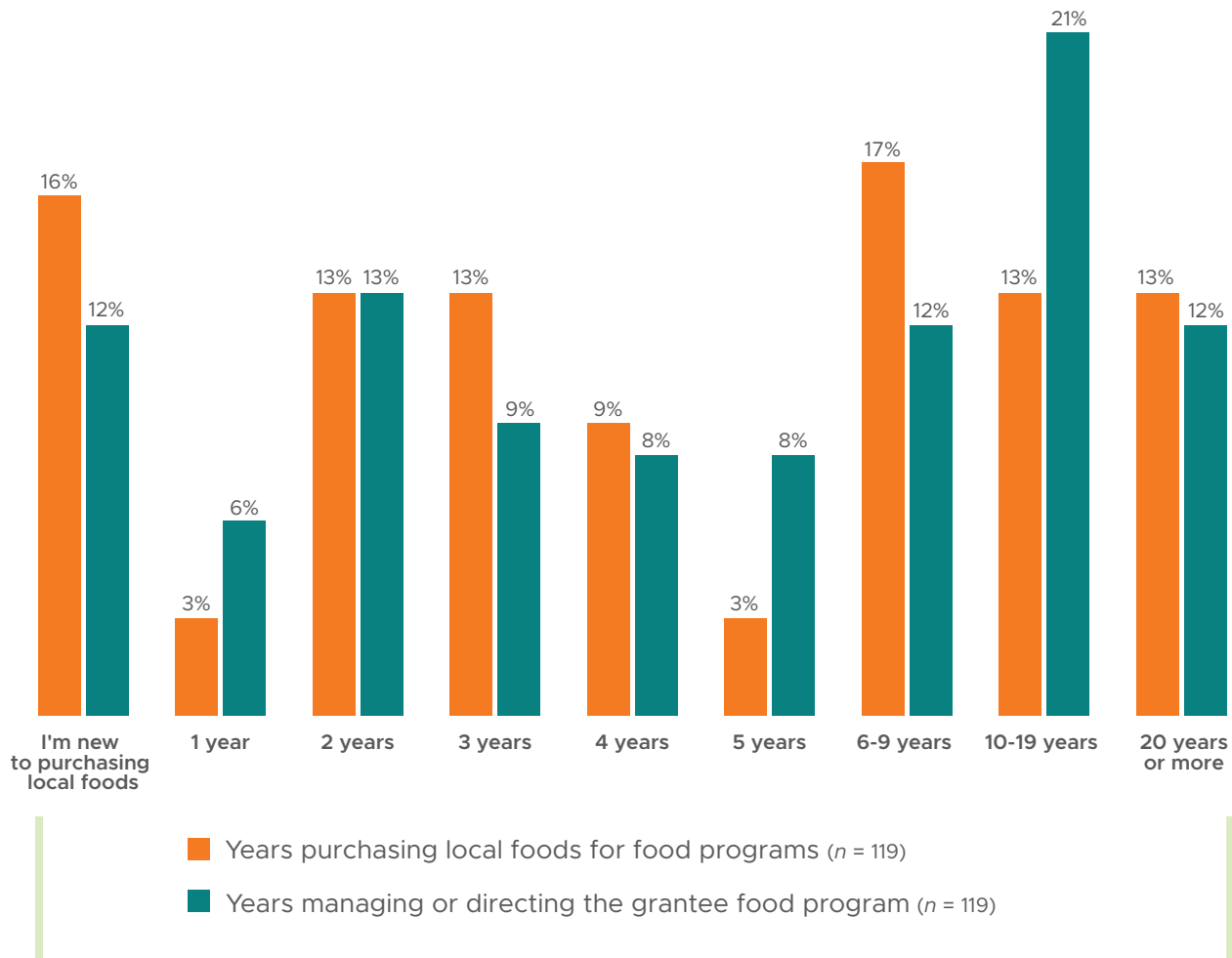
This was a significant change from the previous year (2021–2022) when over half (58%) of all FPMs were new to the grant.

Note: N = 240

In the first survey (May), 119 FPMs reported their local food purchasing experience. For the 2022–2023 program, there were fewer FPMs who reported that they were new to this practice (16%, 19 grantees) compared to the previous year (26%, 58 grantees). Similar to the previous year, nearly a quarter of FPMs indicated that they had 10 years or more of experience purchasing local foods (26%, 31 grantees). This shows that there is an **even distribution among those who are newer to purchasing local foods and those who have more experience purchasing local foods.**

Finally, nearly half of all FPMs had 6 years or more of experience managing their respective food programs: 21% (47 grantees) of FPMs indicated 6–9 years and 27% (61 grantees) indicated 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 in 10 Cents a Meal.** 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 2022–2023



MOTIVATIONS, BARRIERS, AND CHALLENGES FOR PURCHASING AND SERVING LOCAL FOODS

In the first evaluation survey (May), FPMs were asked about the motivators, barriers, and logistical challenges to purchasing and serving local foods in their food program.¹²

All three questions were open-ended to allow participants to describe their feedback in their own words. For evaluation purposes, barriers were considered general and big-picture obstacles that prevent or block a grantee's ability to purchase and serve local foods. Logistical challenges were considered general and big-picture obstacles specific to the operations of food service programs, including how they work with food vendors.

¹² Refer to the "Technical Notes" in the [Appendices for Sustaining Momentum for Michigan's Future: 2022–2023 10 Cents a Meal Evaluation Report](#) for detailed response rates and analysis on these questions.

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

- **helping Michigan farms and food businesses** (28%);
- **benefits to children** (26% of reported motivators), included increasing their consumption of healthy and nutritious foods as well as providing educational opportunities;
- **product attributes of Michigan-grown foods** (25%), such as freshness, increased quality, better taste, and increase in variety; and
- **supporting the community** (12%).

Other motivators reported by FPMs (8%) included the benefit of additional funds from grant awards; sustainability, such as environmental impacts and reduced carbon footprint; and the positive impact of program participation on public and community relations. Overall, the motivators mentioned this year compare similarly to previous years, particularly with the top four motivators, which were also ranked highly in 2021–2022.



Serving local foods to our children gives them an experience they might not get at home. Some children won't try certain foods, and we can give them an opportunity to try in a variety of different ways.

— ECE GRANTEE



Purchasing locally is great way to promote our program while improving food quality.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE



The ripple effect outward from this simple decision can help farmers in Michigan sustain their businesses, families in our neighborhood access fresh produce, and students in our program build healthy eating habits early.

— ECE GRANTEE

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

- **Issues related to food service operations** were cited in 41% of reported logistical challenges and 26% of barriers. FPMs reported challenges with lack of available labor and capacity as well as equipment and storage, limited food service budgets, children's taste preferences, and restrictions to procure from local food suppliers through their food service management or vended meal company.
- **Supply chain issues** were cited in 23% of reported barriers and 44% of logistical challenges. These reported issues were related to limitations in delivery methods from food suppliers to the grantees, finding farms near the programs, and information available from food businesses about local products such as the farm of origin.
- **The lack of availability of local foods** was cited in 38% of reported barriers and 15% of logistical challenges. This relates to the seasonality of Michigan produce and how it limited the availability of produce in the offseason (winter), as well as the lack of large volumes of local foods from farms and food suppliers that market to schools and other child nutrition program operators.



We are only eligible to receive one delivery a week [from our vendor], and I find it's sometimes challenging to meet the required minimum during the winter months when there isn't a ton of fresh products available.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE



We have to ensure that we get the best price on produce for our program with the huge labor cost increases and the huge food cost increases.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE



Delivery times...the farmers need to be out in the fields during the time that we are in operation. Most of them are just two-person teams. But in the end, we make it work even if I have to stay last or come in before 6:00 a.m. or on the weekends.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

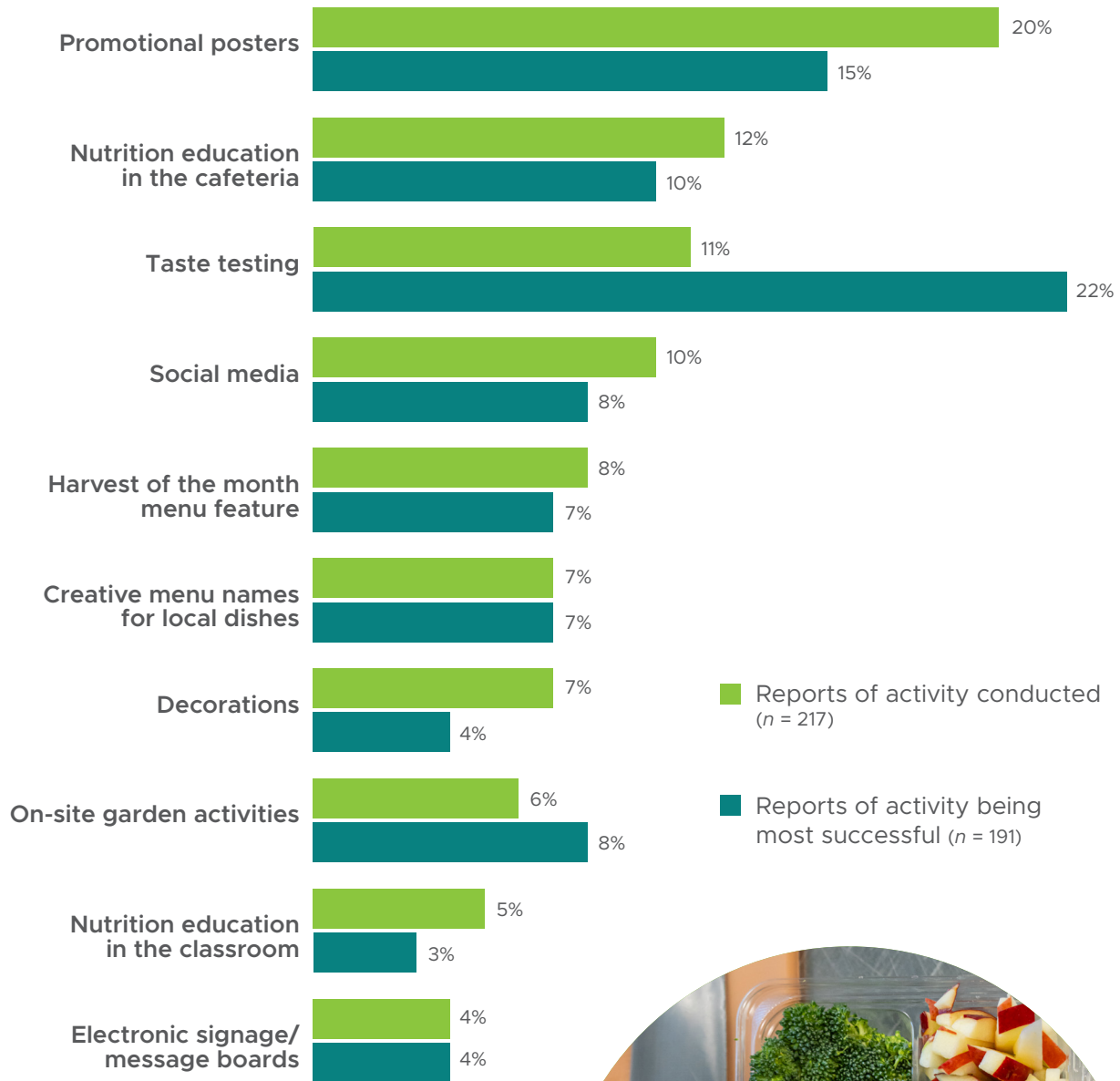
PROMOTIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING 10 CENTS A MEAL

In each of the evaluation surveys conducted (May, August), participating FPMs were asked about activities that have been conducted to support local foods. These results may be more likely to include activities related to the food program and cafeteria and less likely to capture all related activities conducted within the broader operating environment, as some FPMs may not know about all activities being conducted during the year. Additionally, the supportive activities were reported by type and not by number of instances per type.

Across the year, 217 different participating FPMs submitted 873 reports of types of activities conducted in support of 10 Cents a Meal throughout the program. The key results are summarized below.

- **The average number of types of activities reported throughout the year was four, but 54 different grantees reported no supportive activities conducted across all surveys.**
- **The top activities reported by total percent of FPMs were promotional posters (131 grantees, 60%), nutrition education in the cafeteria (86 grantees, 40%), and taste testing (73 grantees, 34%).**
- **Similar to previous years, taste testing was the most successful activity (57 different grantees, 66 reports, 22%) by FPMs. Other top activities considered successful included promotional posters (40 grantees, 44 reports, 15%) and nutrition education in the cafeteria (28 grantees, 30 reports, 10%).**
- **At least 39 Michigan-grown foods were tried through taste tests conducted by 57 grantees.** Reported taste tested foods included Michigan-grown apples, cherries, blueberries, asparagus, and carrots, along with menu items such as smoothies, coleslaw, sandwiches, soups, and salads.

Figure 2. Top Promotional and Educational Activities Supporting 10 Cents a Meal by Number of Reports in 2022–2023





10 Cents a Meal Spotlight

FoodCorps Michigan

Cassidy Hough, Food Education Service Member

FoodCorps is a nonprofit organization that works with schools and communities, including 10 Cents a Meal grantees, to connect children to healthy food and education. Service members work with teachers, students, and other community members to establish farm to school programs and other projects to improve school food. Cassidy Hough is a service member with 10 Cents a Meal grantee, Alanson Public Schools in Northern Michigan. Click [here](#) to read the full news story, **“Who’s Feeding Our Kids: Adventures in Food Education,”** by Amanda Brezzell of Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities.

Can you give a description of your role with FoodCorps?

I am a food education service member. I go into classes, mostly K–6, and teach hands-on lessons about food, agriculture, and nutrition. In the warm months, I take kids into the garden where we plant and eat our crops. This (for me at least) involves a lot of cooking and eating in the classroom. My personal goal is to broaden children’s palettes and lessen fear of foods.

Can you describe a project you have planned, led, or participated in while serving with FoodCorps that was meaningful to you and/or your students?

Earlier this year, the fourth-grade teacher came to me and asked if I could teach her students to cook. She told me that many of them aren’t fed dinner when they get home, so she wanted to supply them with the tools to provide for themselves. I enthusiastically agreed and thus the Friday Cooking Challenge was born. Once a month on a Friday, I come in and teach the kids how to cook something on one of our six plug-in induction stoves. The kids are in teams (that they will remain in all year) that compete against other teams to create the best variation of the dish. For example, the first month we did quesadillas, and last month we did eggs. I provide a wide variety of ingredients that students can either decide to incorporate or not. At the end, I try a bite of everyone’s dish and crown the winners of best dish and best restaurant, which is the team that worked together the best.



FOOD PREPARATION METHODS

Food preparation methods vary at 10 Cents a Meal grantee sites, and this could have an influence on how FPMs use the program.

In the first survey (May), we asked FPMs how often they used each of three meal preparations (heat and serve, semi-prepared, and scratch cooking, with an “other” option if needed) as part of their overall food service operation.¹³ We asked them to share the percentage of the time that each method was used. “Other” was selected by 11 grantees, with the most common methods reported as the use of prepackaged, ready to serve, and vended meals.

Results were similar to the previous program year, and of the 196 FPMs who responded to this question:

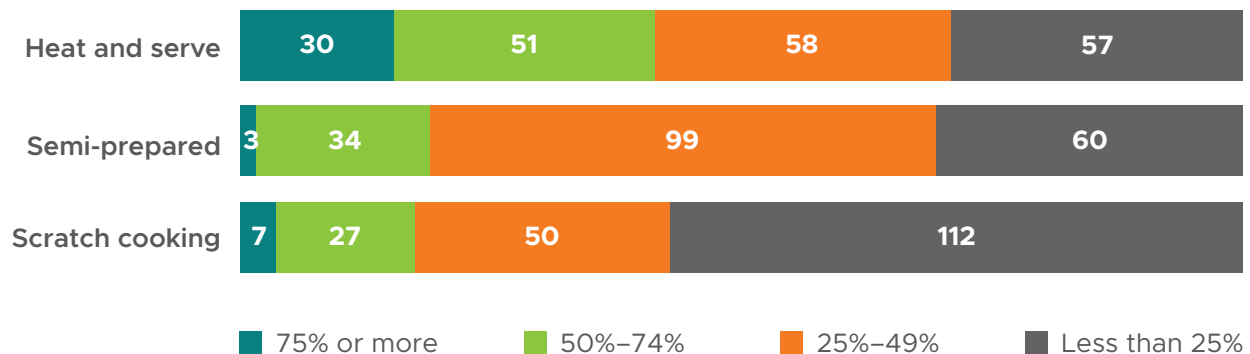
- **heat and serve was the most commonly reported method**, with over a third of responding grantees (41%, 81 grantees) using this method for at least 50% of their food preparation;
- **scratch cooking was the least commonly used method**, with the majority of grantees (57%, 112 grantees) using it for less than 25% of their food preparation; and
- **semi-prepared methods were used for less than 50% of food preparation** by most grantees (82%, 159 grantees).



In the past we have had staff shortages, making it difficult to plan events and increase scratch cooking.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL GRANTEE

Figure 3. Reported Percentage Use of Meal Preparation Methods (out of 100%) by 10 Cents a Meal Grantees in 2022–2023



Note: $n = 196$.

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.

Information collected about meal preparation methods can help identify differences in the ways grantees prepare Michigan-grown foods and in their participation in the 10 Cents a Meal program. Findings such as the high prevalence of heat-and-serve methods relate to grantee reports about how fresh, whole foods require additional processing and labor that they might not have the capacity for (see [Motivations, Barriers, and Challenges for Purchasing and Serving Local Foods](#)). As shared in a previous evaluation report, analysis could shed light on the influence of scratch cooking on the preference of local foods by children or the influence of heat-and-serve methods on the purchasing of local foods by FPMs. These findings could ultimately help inform the training or education of food service personnel participating in 10 Cents a Meal.

RESPONSE OF FOOD PROGRAM STAFF TO PURCHASING AND SERVING MICHIGAN-GROWN FOODS THROUGH 10 CENTS A MEAL

Food program staff are key to the success of local food purchasing activities at 10 Cents a Meal schools, ECEs, and other sites. In the final (August) evaluation survey, participating FPMs were asked about how food program staff responded to the purchase and service of Michigan-grown throughout the program year. There were 165 participating FPMs who shared responses, and evaluators categorized them as positive, negative, or neutral feedback.

- **The majority of FPMs (88%, 146 grantees) reported a generally positive staff response to local foods** for 10 Cents a Meal, and 13 FPMs (8%) stated their staff response was neutral or indifferent.
- **There were six grantees who shared that their food program staff had negative or mixed reactions to local foods** for 10 Cents a Meal. Of these responses, there was often a negative statement accompanied by something positive. For example, staff disliked the extra preparation of local foods; however, they appreciated the freshness and that their children loved the taste.



We anticipated the staff would be unwilling and object to the extra work we asked them to do. (It is usually a hot vegetable that they cook.) However, most of them think this is a great thing and provide feedback (good and bad), and we share all of the feedback on our social media and list which school said it. The staff is glad to introduce new Michigan-grown items to our students.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE



[Staff respond] very well, but they get concerned about the overall invoice cost compared to Commodity DOD fruit and vegetable prices.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE



My staff gains additional pride in their work by being able to offer locally grown fruits, vegetables, and legumes to our students. Sometimes it can be challenging to figure out how to work it into our day, but they love being able to feature local products in our kitchens for the students to eat.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

CONCLUSION

Evaluation findings show there is a variety of experience among participating FPMs in both the years of participation in 10 Cents a Meal and in the purchasing and serving local foods.

Across 10 Cents a Meal grantees, at least one of the three typical meal preparation methods are used in food service programs—heat and serve, semi-prepared, and scratch cooking—and this shows that programs can participate with almost any meal preparation method. Grantees reported several motivations for purchasing and serving local foods, such as helping Michigan farms and food businesses, benefits to children, product attributes of Michigan-grown foods, and supporting the community. Yet, grantees also reported several barriers and logistical challenges to purchasing and serving local foods, such as lack of available food service staff, equipment and storage, limited food service budgets, and supply chain issues. Despite these barriers, the majority of FPMs shared that food program staff respond positively to 10 Cents a Meal participation. In addition to purchasing and serving meals with local foods, FPMs even reported conducting a range of promotional and educational activities, such as taste testing and nutrition education.

Future evaluation could further explore how the characteristics of food service programs, such as meal preparation methods or perceived barriers, may influence grantee purchasing and service of local food through 10 Cents a Meal. These findings could help 10 Cents a Meal program administrators and farm to school partners provide the education and resources grantees need to support their efforts.



Michigan Farmers and Vendors Participating in the 10 Cents a Meal Supply Chain

Small- and medium-scale Michigan farms and food suppliers benefit from the 10 Cents a Meal program through market opportunities. The following summary uses grantee-submitted purchasing information between September 2022 and August 2023 to highlight the many different farms and food suppliers who sold Michigan-grown foods through the program.

Please note that the results summarized below are representative of the 181 grantees who reported purchasing information to the MDE. Additionally, there were instances in which purchase submission errors by some grantees resulted in overall underreporting of the total dollars spent on purchases.

During the 2022–2023 program, grantees reported spending nearly \$4 million dollars on Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans.¹⁴ Of these purchases, grantees reported at least 248 unique vendors, of which 190 were farms that supplied Michigan-grown foods through the 10 Cents a Meal food supply chain. These farms were located in 52 different counties, 63% of all counties in the state. In addition to grantee reports, several vendors (distributors and food hubs) shared lists of farms with 10 Cents a Meal program administrators to account for products purchased by grantees that may have been sourced from multiple Michigan farms. Together, their lists included 113 farms not already reported by grantees, for a possible total of 303 unique Michigan farms as the sources of 10 Cents a Meal foods. Other vendors in the 10 Cents a Meal supply chain included farmer cooperatives, food hubs, grocery stores/retail, processors, and distributors (broadline and specialty).

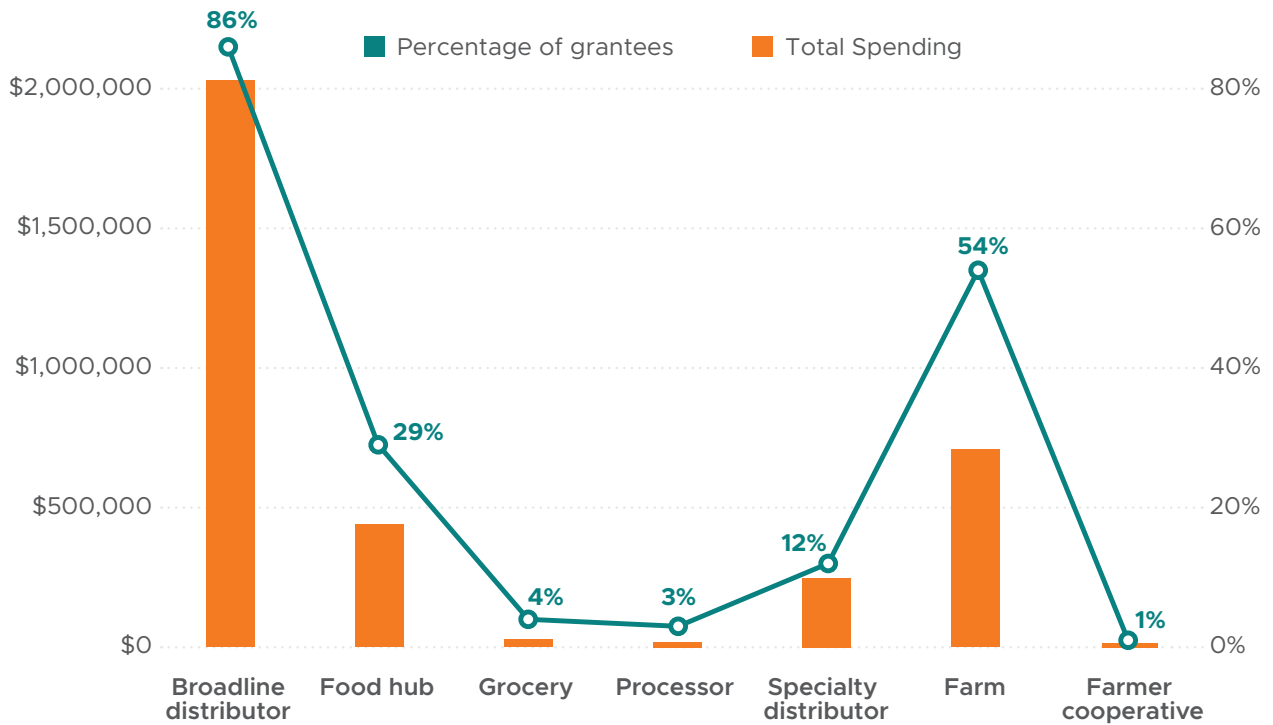
Grantees reported spending nearly
\$4 million
on Michigan-grown foods.

Based on grantee purchases, the market channels through which foods moved from the farm to 10 Cents a Meal grantees are described below.

- **Regardless of the market channel used, grantees reported an average of seven farms of origin (6.6) for their Michigan food purchases.**
- **More than half of grantees (64%, 116 of 181 who reported purchasing information) used two or more types of market channels,** while 36% (65 of 181 who reported purchasing information) reported using just one type of market channel.
- **More than half (58%) of all 10 Cents a Meal purchases reported (in dollars) were from broadline distributors,** a fifth (20%) were direct from farms, and 13% were from food hubs, as seen in the figure below.

¹⁴ Refer to the summary [“What Foods Are Served Through 10 Cents a Meal?”](#) for more information about the different Michigan-grown foods served.

Figure 4. Spending Through Market Channels Used by 10 Cents a Meal Grantees in 2022–2023



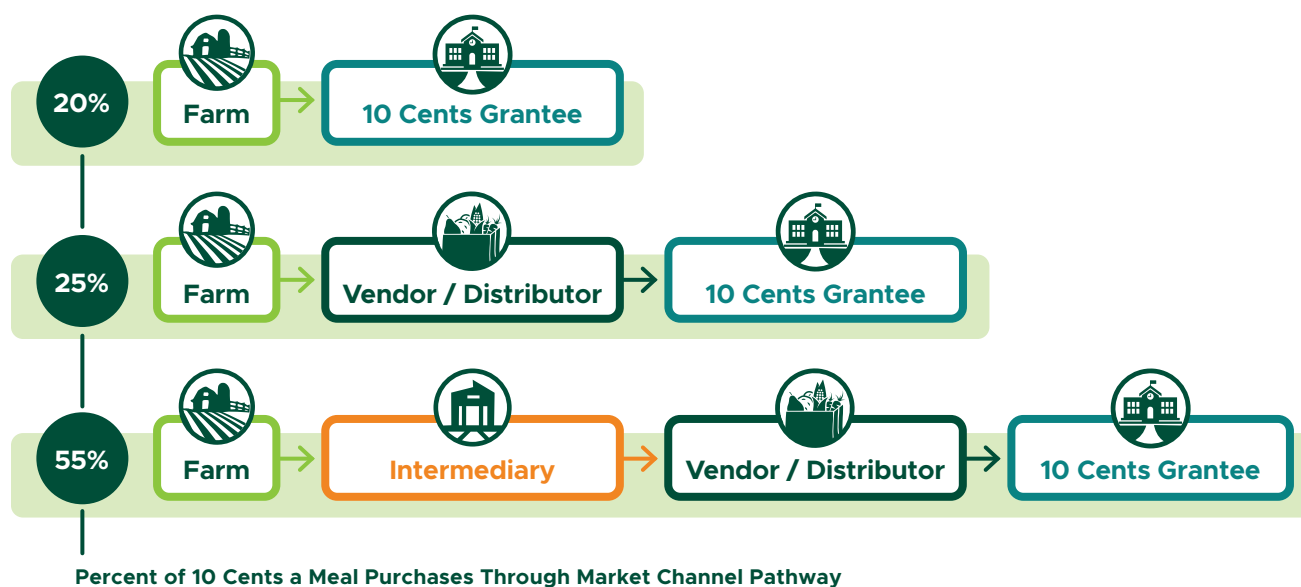
Note: n = 181

In 10 Cents a Meal, an intermediary vendor is defined as a vendor who purchases products from Michigan farmers and then sells those products to another vendor or distributor before they reach grantees, as seen in the figure below. A common mistake in grantee-reported purchasing information is when they report only one vendor, such as a broadline distributor, but do not account for the intermediary vendor.

Similarly, grantees may report only the name of the farm without reporting the distributor, which could lead to an overrepresentation of farm-direct purchases. Information collected from broadline distributors shows that nearly all grantees reported purchases (91%, 165 of 181 grantees) using an intermediary market channel to acquire Michigan-grown products at least once, and over half of all grantee purchases (55%) included an intermediary.



Figure 5. Possible Common Market Channels in the 10 Cents a Meal Supply Chain in 2022–2023



MICHIGAN FARMERS’ SALES IN THE 10 CENTS A MEAL SUPPLY CHAIN

A less common way that Michigan farms participate in the 10 Cents a Meal program is by **selling directly to 10 Cents a Meal grantees**. Ninety-eight grantees reported purchasing over \$700,000 of Michigan-grown products directly from 149 individual farms (20% of total reported purchases). These farms were located in 32 counties across the state.

- **Most of these farms that sold direct to grantees (72%) sold just one category of food products**, whether it was fruits, vegetables, or dry beans. Three farms sold all three categories of products direct to grantees.
- **The top Michigan-grown foods** grantees reported most frequently as purchased directly from farms were:
 - **apples** (53%),
 - **lettuce** (5%),
 - **blueberries** (5%),
 - **peaches** (4%), and
 - **tomatoes** (2%).

Grantees reported purchasing over

\$700k

of Michigan-grown products directly from 149 individual farms.

Some farms sold community-supported agriculture (CSA) boxes directly to 10 Cents a Meal grantees, and more information about CSAs can be found in the summary “[What Foods Are Served Through 10 Cents a Meal](#).” One public school grantee and several family care childcare sponsors participating in the [10 Cents a Meal Family Day Care Pilot](#) reported purchasing CSA

boxes (>1% of all purchases) from six different farms. CSA boxes are a great way to support farms as they can ensure some up-front income because they typically require customer payments for a subscription in advance of the growing season.

In addition to selling direct to grantees, many farmers who benefited from the 10 Cents a Meal program sold through intermediaries, food hubs, and distributors instead or in addition to selling direct to grantees. Among the farms reported as vendors by grantees (190 farms), 122 farms sold through one type of market channel, 43 sold through two different market channels, 20 sold through three different market channels, and two sold through four different market channels.

The table below shows three real examples of how farms participating in the 10 Cents a Meal supply chain reached grantees through different market channels.

Table 6. Examples of How Farms Participated in the 10 Cents a Meal Supply Chain in 2022–2023

Farm	Products	Market channels	Grantees reached	Potential reach (children)
A	Fruits (4 types) Vegetables (5 type)	Food hub, farm direct	17 schools, 1 childcare sponsor	64,026
B	Vegetable (1 type)	Broadline distributor, food hub, farm direct	5 schools	2,624
C	CSA box	Farm direct	1 school, 1 childcare sponsor	14,617

Each year, program administrators at MDE work with vendors to improve grantee reporting of the farm of origin for their purchases. For this program year, more than half (65%) of all 10 Cents a Meal purchases (in dollars) did not include a farm of origin. When grantees can report the farm of origin, it helps improve the program’s integrity because their purchased foods can be verified Michigan-grown.

- Aside from purchasing direct from the farm, grantees reported the farm of origin most often when they purchased from food hubs.
- Grantees most often did not report the farm of origin when they reported purchasing from broadline distributors (86% of purchases).



INFLUENCE OF 10 CENTS A MEAL ON GRANTEES' RELATIONSHIPS WITH FARMS AND FOOD SUPPLIERS

In the final survey (August), FPMs were asked several questions related to their participation in 10 Cents a Meal and its impact on farmers or local food vendors/suppliers.¹⁵

- Half of responding grantees reported that participating in 10 Cents a Meal allowed them to make connections with new farmers or suppliers (52%, 100 out of 192) and improve their existing relationships with farmers or local food suppliers (50%, 96 out of 192).
- The majority (67%, 92 out of 138) of responding grantees indicated that **10 Cents a Meal participation positively influenced farms, distributors, processors, or other food businesses** to better meet their food service needs.



This program offers us the opportunity to connect with new farmers as we look for ways to expand our offerings. I talk to them through email and face-to-face at events hosted by MSU Extension and MSU Center for Regional Food Systems, in addition to walking around my local farmers market.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE



The existing relationships are special and unique as word of mouth and being at local farmers markets helps spread the word on all the amazing work we are doing for our students, farmers, and community.

— NONPUBLIC SCHOOL GRANTEE



Utilizing 10 Cents a Meal has increased my ability to feel more comfortable ordering locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables both from a farm directly and through [food hub].

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

Of the responding grantees, 92 shared written responses about their participation in 10 Cents a Meal positively influencing farmers or other food vendors to better meet their food service needs. Some of the most common themes reported were related to:

- **increased access to local foods** for food service programs (27% of all responses);
- **improved supply chain logistics**,¹⁶ such as better delivery options or invoice reports (17% of all responses);
- **improved relationships** (15% of all responses); and
- **increased demand** for local products (12% of all responses).

¹⁵ Refer to the “Technical Notes” in the [Appendices for Sustaining Momentum for Michigan's Future: 2022–2023 10 Cents a Meal Evaluation Report](#) for a detailed explanation of open-text written response analysis.

¹⁶ For the purposes of this analysis, we define the components of supply chain logistics as physical goods and services (e.g., delivery methods), as well as information about products, vendors, and invoices.

In addition to grantees sharing positive feedback, 28 grantees shared responses that were not applicable to the question, such as starting the program late or not having the staff capacity to fully participate in the program. There were also eight grantees who cited issues about vendors; half of responses were about the inability to make connections with local food suppliers, and half were about a particular local food vendor who stopped delivering to their region during the program year. In the future, we hope to collect feedback from vendors directly to gather more information about 10 Cents a Meal’s impact on relationships between vendors and grantees and its potential impact on increasing sales of Michigan-grown foods through the program.



[Farmers and/or food businesses] see us as a new market for them to sell to, and they are reaching out to other schools and planning their harvest with schools in mind.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE



Our one-on-one communication allows them to understand the quantity of items I need, even if it means sourcing the items from multiple suppliers in the area. Farmers have the quantity of items we need for all our students.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

CONCLUSION

Evaluation findings show that FPMs are reporting purchases from a wide range of farmers and food suppliers across the state. These farms and suppliers are participating in and benefiting from the 10 Cents a Meal supply chain by selling directly to grantees or through various market channels. Over 248 unique vendors were reported by grantees, including 190 farms in 52 counties that supplied Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans.



The FPM feedback through survey responses continues to show that grantees are making new connections and improving relationships with Michigan farmers and food vendors through participation in 10 Cents a Meal. Additionally, they report the program helps improve supply chain logistics and increase demand for local products at farms and food businesses. As we look to the future, evaluation can help us track grantee spending and relationships with farms and food suppliers over time, both directly from grantee feedback as well as potential feedback direct from farmers or food suppliers. At this time, these evaluation findings can help grantees and other farm to school stakeholders learn about how Michigan-grown foods make their way through the 10 Cents a Meal supply chain. Last, farmers and food suppliers can also use these findings to learn about the market channels that grantees use so that they can be better informed about this growing market.





10 Cents a Meal Spotlight

Mitchell's Patch of Blue

Kyle A. Mitchell, Organic Blueberry Operations Manager

Mitchell's Patch of Blue is a family farm in Bangor, Michigan, and they specialize in organic, heirloom blueberries. Since 2021, the farm sells to a food hub that distributes local produce to all kinds of buyers across Southwest Michigan, including 10 Cents a Meal grantees. Click here to read the full news story, "[Who's Feeding Our Kids: The Farmer's Perspective](#)," by Amanda Brezzell of Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities.

Tell us more about your operation.

Mitchell's Patch of Blue is a family run farm that specializes in organic heirloom blueberries and has about 20,000 bushes that are a combination of Rubel, Duke, Pemberton, Blueray, Earliblue, Jersey, and Bluecrop. My grandparents started the farm in 1956 with four acres, and over the years it has continued to expand to the current 23 acres we have in production now. The farm is located 6.5 miles from Lake Michigan in Bangor, Michigan. We have U-pick and Pre-Pick available July through mid-August.

What do you recommend for farmers who want to sell their products to local schools and institutions?

To grow food for schools, it all starts with having a product that our schools can work with and that the kids will eat. Farmers should understand both on-the-farm and in-the-kitchen food safety so they can provide the most nutritious, safe, delicious product available. Having a food safety plan that everyone on your team is following is Step 1. Step 2 is to provide a product that the schools can cook and serve in mass quantities with ease. I was a health inspector for 6.5 years, and most of the schools I inspected did not have much more than a convection oven. If you are providing a product that requires a ton of preparation, you may want to look at doing some of the prep for them and selling it as a value-added product.



What Foods Are Served Through 10 Cents a Meal?

Throughout the 10 Cents a Meal program, FPMs report the Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans they purchased and served to children through 10 Cents a Meal. In the 2022–2023 program, 181 out of 240 grantees shared purchasing information (September 2022–August 2023), including types of foods, their dollar amounts, and farms of origin.

Additionally, 218 different grantees responded to questions in evaluation surveys about their food purchasing, such as the Michigan-grown products they tried and those that are of interest. This summary shares our findings about the variety of Michigan-grown foods served through this program.

There were 16 types of Michigan-grown fruits, 41 types of Michigan-grown vegetables, and eight varieties of Michigan-grown dry beans that 10 Cents a Meal grantees purchased across the year.

- Similar to the previous year, a grantee purchased an average of **four different types of fruits and six different types of vegetables** during the program year.
- Of all the grantees who reported purchases, **99% purchased fruits and 87% purchased vegetables.**
- In dollars, **fruits made up the majority (86%) of 10 Cents a Meal purchases**, and just over a tenth (13%) of purchases were on vegetables.
- Fewer than 1% of 10 Cents a Meal purchases** (in dollars) **were for dry beans** by 9% of all grantees (16 grantees). This category has significant potential to increase in spending by grantees because Michigan is a leading producer of dry beans.
- The top 10 foods purchased** (in rank order of total dollars spent) included apples, blueberries, carrots, peaches, lettuce, cucumbers, cherries, salad greens, pears, and tomatoes.



The top 10 foods purchased (in rank order of total dollars spent) included:

- apples
- blueberries
- carrots
- peaches
- lettuce
- cucumbers
- cherries
- salad greens
- pears
- tomatoes

This was the second year that grantees reported purchasing CSA boxes. Purchases were reported by one school district grantee and by childcare providers who participated in a family day care home pilot (>1% of purchases).¹⁷ The products in a CSA box vary seasonally, and they may include a combination of fruits, vegetables, and dry beans. Since grantees are not required to report the specific foods sold in each CSA box, the full extent of products is unknown.

Through 10 Cents a Meal, children can choose and try different Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans.¹⁸ This year's findings show that while FPMs are often serving foods that are common to food programs, they also are likely introducing Michigan children to new tastes and flavors.

Some of the most common Michigan-grown foods served included:

- **apples** (178 grantees)
- **cucumbers** (122 grantees)
- **blueberries** (84 grantees)
- **peppers** (77 grantees)
- **lettuce** (74 grantees)

Grantees spent the most on:

- **apples** (80% of total purchases in dollars)
- **blueberries** (2% of total purchases in dollars)
- **carrots** (2% of total purchases in dollars)
- **peaches** (2% of total purchases in dollars)
- **lettuce** (2% of total purchases in dollars)

- **Some FPMs even served children foods such as kohlrabi microgreens, heirloom tomatoes, Romanesco, trumpet mushrooms, honey berries, and watermelon radishes** that may be uncommon in school and ECE food programs.
- Although grantees were not required to specify varieties of foods in their reporting, some FPMs also shared the varieties of their purchases:¹⁹ **at least eight varieties of dry beans** (black, cannellini, lima, Mayocoba, navy, pinto, red kidney, and great northern) and **over 30 different varieties of apples** were served to children.

30+

different varieties of apples were served to children.

In the final evaluation survey (August), the majority of responding grantees (77%, 150 out of 196) reported that 10 Cents a Meal grants allowed them to try new Michigan-grown foods that they otherwise would not have tried.



The staff are excited to provide new opportunities through taste testing and exposing our students to some otherwise cost-prohibitive items.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE



It's great to see the children trying new things. Sometimes they look at it a couple of times on the salad bar and ask questions about it. Then the next time it is offered you see them trying it. WIN-WIN.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

¹⁷ 10 Cents a Meal was piloted in family childcare homes with providers who participate in the CACFP with a CACFP sponsor (Association for Child Development). For evaluation findings through the pilot, read [A Quick Glance at the 2022–2023 Daycare Home and Family Day Care Pilot](#).

¹⁸ Refer to [Why 10 Cents Matters: A Framework](#), which was developed with program stakeholders for more information about program goals.

¹⁹ Because product varieties were not required for grantee reporting, product names were inconsistently reported and therefore not examined in detail.

Additionally, in both surveys during the year (May, August), FPMs were asked if they served any new Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, or dry beans for the first time in their program since the start of the year or the last survey.²⁰ If they indicated “yes,” they were asked to list up to 12 Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans they tried. Throughout the year, 106 FPMs made 348 total reports of trying a Michigan-grown fruit, vegetable, or dry bean for the first time.

- FPMs reported serving an average of **three new Michigan-grown foods** during the year.
- Together, grantees reported **trying for the first time 39 types of vegetables and 16 types of fruits.**²¹
- The **top 10 new Michigan-grown foods** reported by FPMs (in rank order of the number of written responses) were apples, cherries, asparagus, dry beans, blueberries, lettuce, carrots, radishes, peaches, and cucumbers.
- FPMs reported purchasing and serving **new Michigan-grown vegetables** (205 reports) **more than Michigan-grown fruits** (125 reports) and dry beans (21 reports).
- The top new Michigan-grown **vegetables served for the first time were asparagus** (18 grantees), **lettuce** (15 grantees), **radishes** (14 grantees), and **carrots** (14 grantees).
- Other than apples (36 grantees), the top new Michigan-grown **fruits served for the first time included cherries** (18 grantees), **blueberries** (15 grantees), and **peaches** (12 grantees).
- This year, **17 FPMs reported serving Michigan-grown dry beans for the first time**, with specified varieties including black beans (nine grantees), pinto beans (four grantees), lima beans (two grantees), navy beans (one grantee), and great northern beans (one grantee).

106

FPMs made 348 total reports of trying a Michigan-grown fruit, vegetable, or dry bean for the first time.

The top 10 new Michigan-grown foods reported by FPMs:

- apples
- cherries
- asparagus
- dry beans
- blueberries
- lettuce
- carrots
- radishes
- peaches
- cucumbers



In both evaluation surveys during the year (May, August), FPMs were asked if there were any Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, or dry beans that they wanted to use but were unable to find or buy for their food program. If FPMs responded “yes,” they were asked to list up to 12 Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans they wanted to use in their food program, including the product form. Throughout the year, 62 FPMs confirmed that there were Michigan-grown products they would like to serve but were unable to find or buy.²² These grantees made 250 total reports of a Michigan-grown fruit, vegetable, or dry bean that they wanted to try. On average, grantees each reported four foods during the year.

20 Refer to the “Technical Notes” in the [Appendices for Sustaining Momentum for Michigan’s Future: 2022–2023 10 Cents a Meal Evaluation Report](#) to see the survey months and response rates for each question.

21 Although not included in our findings, grantees purchased various types of unspecified fruits and vegetables, such as mixes, blends, and medleys.

22 Refer to the “Technical Notes” in the [Appendices for Sustaining Momentum for Michigan’s Future: 2022–2023 10 Cents a Meal Evaluation Report](#) to see the survey months and response rates for each question.

- The FPMs reported **wanting to find and buy 15 different types of Michigan-grown fruits** (96 reports) and **33 different types of vegetables** (138 reports).²³
- The top 10 foods FPMs reported wanting to try (in rank order of the number of responses) included peaches, tomatoes, cherries, asparagus, corn, green beans, blueberries, melons, strawberries, and celery.
- Sixteen FPMs reported wanting to try dry beans, including lentils, red bean, and lima beans.
- Thirty-two FPMs reported wanting a food in a specific form such as fresh, frozen, dried, or chopped.

The top 10 foods FPMs reported wanting to try included:

- peaches
- tomatoes
- cherries
- asparagus
- corn
- green beans
- blueberries
- melons
- strawberries
- celery



This is the most challenging part: the prime growing season does not align with our school year.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

CONCLUSION

Through the program, grantees report purchasing and serving a wide variety of Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans. Almost all grantees are purchasing fruits (97% of grantees), and most are purchasing vegetables (81% of grantees), yet only a small portion are purchasing dry beans (9% of grantees) and CSA boxes (3% of grantees).

Similar to previous years of the program, FPMs reported a diverse range of new foods served to children in their food service programs and a variety of foods that they wanted to serve but could not find or buy. Future evaluation could further examine why FPMs reported certain foods that they were seeking and could not find or buy. These findings

could help identify areas for improvement so that program administrators can better support grantees to purchase more of their desired foods.

Evaluation continues to help us track purchasing trends over time, including what Michigan-grown foods grantees are most interested in and are able to incorporate into their menus. These findings can allow 10 Cents a Meal grantees to learn more from each other and about how the program is used by others. Additionally, these findings can help farmers and food suppliers learn more about the demand for Michigan-grown foods through 10 Cents a Meal, including the foods that grantees are most interested in purchasing so they can adapt their plans to sell to this market.



9%

of grantees
are purchasing
dry beans.

23 Although not included in our findings, grantees purchased various types of unspecified fruits and vegetables such as mixes, blends, and medleys.



10 Cents a Meal Spotlight

Plainwell Community Schools

Michael Ritsema, Director of Dining Services

Plainwell Community Schools is a 10 Cents a Meal grantee in Southwest Michigan. The 2022–2023 program was their first year participating in 10 Cents a Meal, and they served over 2,400 children throughout the year in their food service programs. They partner with Kalamazoo Valley Community College’s (KVCC) ValleyHUB to purchase locally grown and minimally processed foods. Click here to read the full news story, [**“Who’s Feeding Our Kids: Plainwell Community Schools and Kalamazoo Valley Community College’s ValleyHUB,”**](#) by Amanda Brezell of Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities.

Can you give a description of how your partnership works?

Simply. The monthly and even weekly emailed newsletters keep us in the know. New products, partnerships, and even marketing/promotional material. You order directly from their ordering website, with real-time quantities and location where the products come from and are delivered directly to our door. ValleyHub has their own beautiful growing and processing facility that only keeps improving along with strong relationships with the local growers and producers.

What positive changes have you witnessed since joining forces with KVCC ValleyHUB?

The smiles on students and staff faces when they take a bite of a locally produced item that was harvested just days before. The bright and vibrant colors that just pop out on our service lines. The warmhearted feeling knowing you are offering the students the best quality food and supporting your local community.



The Big Picture: Does 10 Cents a Meal Work?

Evaluation survey feedback shared by the FPMs participating in 10 Cents a Meal help us track how the program is reaching toward legislative goals: to improve daily nutrition and eating habits for Michigan children, and to invest in Michigan’s agriculture and local food business economy.

The following evaluation findings share outcomes, impacts, and feedback reported by FPMs as well as their needs to support their continued purchasing and serving of Michigan-grown foods.²⁴

OUTCOMES OF PARTICIPATING IN 10 CENTS A MEAL

In the second and final evaluation survey (August), FPMs were asked, “Related to your food service operation, which of the following outcomes has the 10 Cents a Meal program helped you to achieve?” The FPMs could select all options that applied from a list of outcome statements. There were 191 grantees who reported outcomes of the 10 Cents a Meal program. For this evaluation report, outcomes are defined as short-term actions or results achieved through participation in 10 Cents a Meal. For a table with all outcome statements and responses, visit the “Technical Notes” in the [Appendices for Sustaining Momentum for Michigan’s Future: 2022–2023 10 Cents a Meal Evaluation Report](#).

191

grantees reported
outcomes of the
10 Cents a Meal
program.

- The FPMs selected **an average of three positive outcomes** of participating in the program.

The top five outcomes (in rank order) chosen by FPMs were:

- **the variety of produce served** in the food service program has increased (108 grantees);
- **our food purchasing budget increased** (91 grantees);
- **we can plan local produce and dry bean purchasing with greater certainty** (86 grantees);
- **our purchasing power is enhanced** (77 grantees); and,
- **we are better able to meet school meal requirements** (51 grantees).

- **Thirteen grantees reported that no outcomes were achieved.** While some grantees did not provide a reason for no outcomes, others shared that limited staff capacity in their food service operations resulted in their inability to participate in 10 Cents a Meal effectively. Reasons included not having time to connect with local food suppliers or time to complete program paperwork.

²⁴ Refer to the “Technical Notes” in the [Appendices for Sustaining Momentum for Michigan’s Future: 2022–2023 10 Cents a Meal Evaluation Report](#) to learn more about the response rates and analysis for survey questions.



We appreciate this program. It has really changed our menu options that we give the children. The families have also mentioned that they like the variety of fresh items on the menu.

— ECE GRANTEE

IMPACTS OF PARTICIPATING IN 10 CENTS A MEAL

In the final August evaluation survey, 212 FPMs responded to the question, “To what extent are each of the following impacts true for your food service operation since participating in 10 Cents a Meal?” The FPMs were provided with a list of statements and asked to choose their level of agreement ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). For this evaluation report, we consider impacts as broader and more long-term results that can be achieved through participation in 10 Cents a Meal. For a table with all impact statements and responses, visit the “Technical Notes” in the [Appendices for Sustaining Momentum for Michigan’s Future: 2022–2023 10 Cents a Meal Evaluation Report](#).

- **A majority of grantees agreed (either strongly or somewhat agreed) that their food program was positively impacted through participating in 10 Cents a Meal, including that they:**
 - **offered more local fruits** (82% of grantees);
 - **increased fruit consumption among students/children** (73% of grantees);
 - **offered more local vegetables** (72% of grantees);
 - **increased vegetable consumption among students/children** (66% of grantees); and
 - **identified new Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans** that are accepted/eaten by the children they serve (53% of grantees).
- Grantees agreed the most with the impact statements “we offered more local fruits” and “we offered more local vegetables” in their food programs due to 10 Cents a Meal grants (agreement levels of 4.1 and 3.9, respectively).
- Similar to previous years, the two impact statements offered about dry beans—“we added more dry beans to our menus” and “our students/children are eating more dry beans”—had the lowest levels of agreement (2.6 and 2.5, respectively).





Serving local foods to our children gives them an experience they might not get at home. Some children won't try certain foods, and we can give them an opportunity to try it in a variety of different ways.

— ECE GRANTEE



We LOVE participating in 10 Cents a Meal. Our students look forward to lunch time and throw less food away because they like the taste and look of the farm fresh produce.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

The FPMs were also asked questions related to their participation in 10 Cents a Meal and the perceived impact on farmers or local food vendors/suppliers. Results from these questions can be reviewed in further detail in the section "[Michigan Farmers and Vendors Participating in the 10 Cents a Meal Supply Chain](#)".

This year's findings showed half of responding grantees agreed that participation in 10 Cents a Meal allowed them to make new connections with farmers and local food vendors/suppliers and to improve existing relationships (52% and 50%, respectively).

50%

of grantees agreed that participating in 10 Cents a Meal allowed them to make new connections with farmers and local food vendors/suppliers.



[Farmers and/or food businesses] are working to produce higher quantities of fresh produce to serve to our children. In turn, the children are receiving, trying for the first time, and enjoying more fresh produce.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE



NEEDS TO SUPPORT PURCHASING AND SERVING MICHIGAN FOODS AND PROGRAM FEEDBACK

In the first evaluation survey (May), 127 different FPMs responded to, “What else do you need to support your efforts to purchase and serve Michigan foods (of any kind) this year?”

In the final survey (August), 119 FPMs responded to a question about what they need to support these efforts into the future. Last, 130 FPMs also provided general program feedback about participating in 10 Cents a Meal in both surveys (May, August), and response themes were similar to those for their needs to support efforts to purchase and serve Michigan foods. Evaluators categorized the responses into themes, and highlights of findings are described below.²⁵

There were 46 grantees (36%) who indicated that they had no current needs at the time and 28 (24%) grantees who had no future needs. **For FPMs who did report needs, the most prominent response theme was similar to last year and was focused on programmatic support for 10**

For FPMs who did report needs, the most prominent response theme was similar to last year and was focused on programmatic support for 10 Cents a Meal participation.

Cents a Meal participation. This was shared in almost half of all current and future need responses (50% and 46%, respectively) and in a third (35%) of program feedback responses. Many responses were related to general training on topics like purchase submission and program requirements, but other responses also included promotional materials, support for finding and connecting to sources of local food, such as a list of local farms and food vendors, and recipes for local foods.



It would be helpful to receive guidance on how to reach local farmers and growers. This year, we just went through [broadline distributor], but we would like to build our own connections.

— NONPUBLIC SCHOOL GRANTEE



More assistance with any already student-accepted bean recipes in any Michigan school. Also share exciting ideas and best practices that are share from different schools.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

Other common responses included needs related to the food supply chain (37% of all current need responses, 35% of all future need responses, 12% of all feedback responses). Responses were related to the desire for increased and improved delivery options from vendors, increased local food options, farm-of-origin information from vendors, and for more local farms and vendors to purchase from.



We use [vendor] as our primary distributor—it would be awesome if there was a local icon attached to various products. We don’t know which items that we’ve purchased are even local until they arrive or after a report is generated.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

²⁵ Refer to the “Technical Notes” in the [Appendices for Sustaining Momentum for Michigan’s Future: 2022–2023 10 Cents a Meal Evaluation Report](#) to learn more about the response rates and analysis for survey questions.



The main issue we are running into is the cost of delivery because we have so many buildings. We are going to try to combine schools and run them around ourselves to keep down cost... Giving local farmers grants towards reducing or eliminating delivery costs to the schools would be nice.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

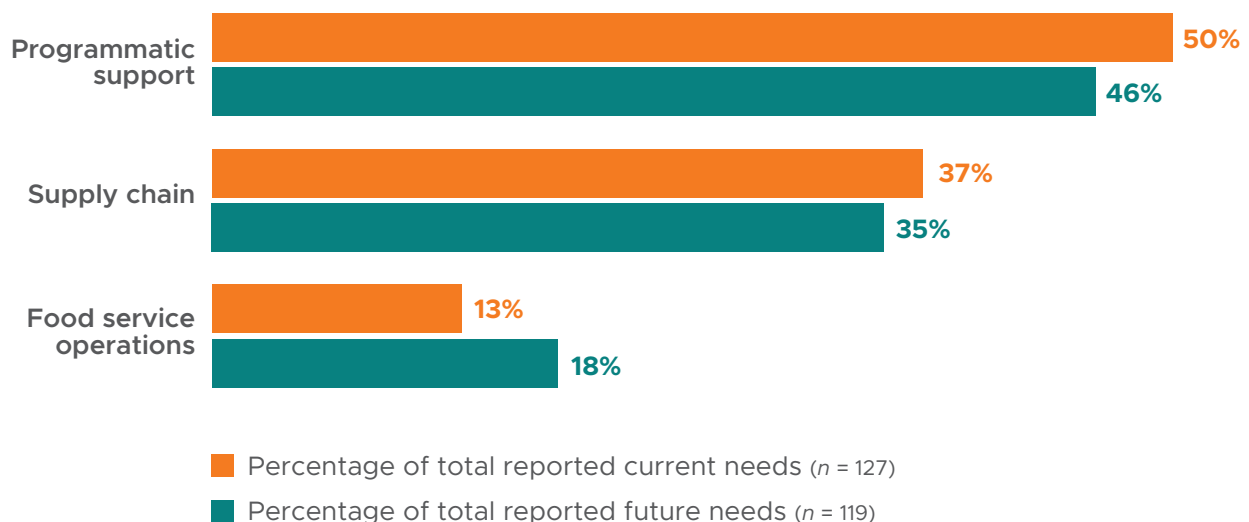
Another need that was mentioned by FPMs was related to their food service operation (13% of all current need responses, 18% of all future need responses, 12% of feedback responses). This included responses about labor to prepare foods, administrative time to submit purchase data, and the need for better equipment to prepare and store foods.



...skills of the workers and not having the equipment needed has been challenging... Trying to find products to use is also a challenge. The one supplier [vendor] that has all Michigan items stopped servicing this area.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

Figure 6. Top Current and Future Needs Reported by 10 Cents a Meal Grantees in 2022–2023



Aside from the program feedback already mentioned about programmatic support, food service operations, and the food supply chain, **nearly half of responding FPMs (63, 48%) shared positive program feedback** about participation in the 10 Cents a Meal program (41% of responses).

- **Most positive feedback was about general support and positive reception toward the program**, including a positive impact on children, food service staff, teachers, and Michigan farmers.
- **Other positive responses shared the benefit of 10 Cents a Meal grants to help them afford more local foods** and the increased programmatic support by the 10 Cents a Meal program administrators.



By having this grant, we have been allowed to introduce the students to more healthy and delicious produce, grains, and dry beans. The grant has been very helpful for our program, and I've also seen how the students are wanting to try more healthy foods.

— NONPUBLIC SCHOOL GRANTEE



All good things to say about this program. It was so successful, and seeing the happy faces and smiles on our students' faces is absolutely the best feeling. We know we are doing our job in feeding healthy nutritious food to our students...

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

REFLECTION

The FPMs share valuable information about their participation in 10 Cents a Meal during the year. Their feedback provides crucial insight into how the programming is working and reaching toward its legislative goals. Survey findings show the program can still improve to support grantees with their local food purchasing efforts, however, findings also show that many benefits resulted from 10 Cents a Meal, as reported by FPMs. Compared to previous years, this program year had the highest number of grantees reporting outcomes including an increased variety in produce served to children and an increased budget to purchase more foods from Michigan farms and food suppliers. This year also had fewer FPMs who reported that they were new to purchasing local foods compared to previous years, and grantees purchased more local foods during the year than ever before. Outcomes like these show that the program is reaching toward its goals to improve daily nutrition and eating habits for Michigan children and investing in Michigan's agriculture.

Evaluation can reveal opportunities to better support grantees with local food purchasing and improve their use of the 10 Cents a Meal program as it evolves over time. It can also help farmers and food suppliers increase and improve their farm to school sales as they learn more about grantee purchasing. In the future, continued evaluation will allow us to track and document how the 10 Cents a Meal program is reaching toward its goals and the impact it has on children, grantee food programs, and Michigan farms and food businesses.





10 Cents a Meal Spotlight

Superior Central Schools

Gabrielle (Gabe) Trader, Food Service Director

Superior Central Schools is a 10 Cents a Meal grantee in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The 2022–2023 program was their first year participating in 10 Cents a Meal and they served over 300 children throughout the year in their food service programs. Click here to read the full news story, [**“Who’s Feeding Our Kids: Building Local Food Systems in the Upper Peninsula,”**](#) by Amanda Brezzell of Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities.

Are there any challenges you have had to overcome in order to service the children in your district with fresh, local food?

Yes, we are a small, rural K–12 school that has approximately 350 students enrolled at any given time. We struggle with making connections with local farms, the short growing season, and the cost of supplies due to our location.

Can you speak to the value of the partnerships formed between districts and farms/What benefits do you see in working with young people and food?

I strongly believe that knowledge is power. By helping young people gain experience and knowledge about the food that we consume, where it comes from, and how to grow your own food, you are helping create a generation of individuals that can help fight food insecurity. When you have the ability to grow your own food and know your local farming community, there will always be someone who is willing to assist you who has a similar belief that there is strength in community and that through the relationships you build, there will always be a helping hand and someone with the knowledge to help you gain that needed experience. Farmers want to help young people gain knowledge about farming, and they want to see the community succeed. When we work together with our farmers, whether it is creating an inclusive environment through our Ag. Ed. programs or by helping to financially support our farmers through local purchases, we are strengthening our community and ensuring that our young people see the value in the various contributions that our community members make.



Recommendations for Future Years of 10 Cents a Meal

As evaluators, we collect survey responses and purchasing information submitted by participating FPMs to understand how each aspect of 10 Cents a Meal works. This summary includes recommendations for the future of 10 Cents a Meal from its program evaluators.

First, the updates listed below are related to recommendations from last year's (2021–2022) evaluation report.²⁶

- 1 Continue providing targeted technical assistance to individual grantees during the program year.** The MDE program administrators are actively building capacity to provide more specialized assistance throughout the year, including the development of a vendor guide for grantees that will list farmers and vendors they can purchase from. Continuing individual assistance is still needed to help grantees find, purchase, and serve more local foods.
- 2 Continue advocating for farm-of-origin information for Michigan-grown foods from food suppliers.** Program administrators continue to work with and ask food vendors to provide better transparency and communication about which of their offered products are Michigan-grown. This work continues to support grantee needs by providing farm-of-origin data for their products.
- 3 Collect data and track participation of ECE grantees.** Since the expansion of eligibility to include ECEs in 2020, interest in participation by these grantees continues to increase.²⁷ In 2022–2023, the number of ECE grantees (15) is still too small for accurate analyses or generalizations about participating ECEs as a group. Therefore, the need to track their local food purchasing patterns and program usage remains. These data can show key differences and unique needs from other types of grantees.
- 4 Consider broadening types of eligible expenses for the program and help inform grantees about additional funding opportunities to better leverage 10 Cents a Meal funds.** This recommendation remains an opportunity for future evaluation. Since last year, MDE has continued to work with their key partner, Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, to advocate for legislative changes. The impact of these changes are discussed further in the following 2022–2023 recommendations.

²⁶ Refer to [Amplifying Impact with More Michigan Farms and Foods: 10 Cents a Meal 2021–2022 Evaluation Results](#).

²⁷ Early care and education sites are settings that focus on the care and/or education and development of young children, such as childcare centers.

The following recommendations are for evaluation purposes and the program’s practice.

- 1 **Collect data and track participation in the family day care home pilot.** Since the last program year (2021–2022), 10 Cents a Meal has been piloted in family childcare homes with providers who participate in CACFP with a CACFP sponsor (ACD). The CACFP is a federal program that provides reimbursements to offset the costs of meals and snacks to children or adults in settings outside of school, such as day care homes or afterschool care programs.²⁸ Through the 10 Cents a Meal pilot, nearly 60 family day care homes and childcare centers were able to receive additional funding through a CACFP sponsor to purchase and serve local foods. More information about the pilot program can be read about in the report [A Quick Glance at the 2022–2023 Family Day Care Pilot](#).



This has given us the chance to feed the children more fresh vegetables and fruits without taking away other important foods from our menu.

— FAMILY DAY CARE HOME PARTICIPATING IN THE PILOT

This pilot is notable because family day care homes and other ECE providers can be very different from the majority of 10 Cents a Meal grantees, such as public school districts. Their food program operations vary greatly in size and can be much smaller than many 10 Cents a Meal food programs. National survey findings have shown that the top barrier to starting and continuing farm to ECE activities is limited funding for supplies, so programs like 10 Cents a Meal can be vital in supporting local food purchasing.²⁹ Evaluation of this pilot can help track participation of childcare providers and measure the impact it has on their food programs.

- 2 **Explore the utilization of 10 Cents a Meal by eligible grantees across the state.** The 10 Cents a Meal program has continuously grown over the years, particularly with the statewide expansion in 2020–2021. Even though the program is open to any sponsor participating in a child nutrition program, such as a public school or childcare provider, only a portion of eligible sponsors participate. For example, just 25% of eligible schools in Michigan (224 out of 899 school districts) were awarded funds to participate in the program in 2022–2023.³⁰ It is important to explore the key influential factors that may entice or discourage sponsors to apply and participate in 10 Cents a Meal. These factors can help inform program administrators and other supporters of farm to program activities so they can improve the program and work with potential grantees to apply and participate.

Similarly, grantees may not utilize all their awarded funds during the program year. As the program grows, program administrators continue to adjust how grant funds are allocated so awards are more accurate based on the grantee’s spending ability. At this time, it would not be accurate to analyze what grantees are spending compared to their award amount because the award amount doesn’t necessarily reflect a realistic spending goal for every grantee. However, it is notable that unspent funds by grantees continue over the years. While this report explores some of the motivations, barriers, and challenges to purchasing local foods, a deeper exploration of why grantees cannot spend all their awards could reveal important findings. In future years, this evaluation could help identify the causes of unspent awards so grantees can be better supported to make the most of participating in the program.

28 Refer to USDA’s [Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) page for more information.

29 Refer to the [2021 National Farm to ECE Survey](#).

30 Refer to MI School Data’s [District/School Count](#) for the full 2022–2023 data.

3

Further analyze the impact of the 10 Cents a Meal program on children and communities. This recommendation is similar to one from a previous evaluation report in 2020–2021.³¹ Evaluation or research on the 10 Cents a Meal program’s impact on children and communities has not been fully explored and could reveal important information about the potential benefits that have taken place and opportunities for further improvement. These potential benefits could range from increased nutrition to improved educational outcomes. Additionally, the use of geographic mapping or spatial analysis within various regions to better visualize and understand the influence on the 10 Cents a Meal foodshed. These findings could help program administrators, participating grantees, and stakeholders better understand how the program is operating throughout the state and how it could improve in the future.

Another consideration includes school funding, which is often determined by a combination of local property taxes and financial support from the state of Michigan.³² Factors like resource allocation and per-pupil funding among schools could be examined to explore differences in a grantee’s ability and capacity to participate in 10 Cents a Meal. These findings could highlight how school funding thresholds can influence equity in resource allocation and, as a result, the utilization of 10 Cents a Meal and program participation.

4

Consider broadening types of eligible expenses for the program to better leverage 10 Cents a Meal funds. This recommendation carries over from the previous evaluation report for 2021–2022.³³ Currently, the 10 Cents a Meal program only funds Michigan-grown food purchases, including foods for supportive activities aside from the foods served in food programs. While these funds support local food purchases through reimbursements, there are many other factors than budgets and food costs that can influence a grantee’s ability to purchase and serve local foods. Evaluation survey feedback in 2022–2023 continues to show factors that may serve as barriers, including food service labor, equipment, and delivery and transportation costs through farms and food businesses.

Through survey feedback, some grantees reported a desire for the program to cover nonfood expenses to help support their food service or food program operations. Funding to improve staff capacity and food service equipment could greatly enhance 10 Cents a Meal participation and the service of local foods to children. This could include training for food service staff on how to prepare and serve fresh, local foods. Previous evaluation findings have found that there could be a relationship between FPM experience and purchasing local foods in 10 Cents a Meal, so having additional training for food service staff could provide many benefits.



I want to add labor to be able to prepare fresh local foods, but sometimes labor is a barrier to being able to do that. Just a thought for future funding.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

Last, funds to cover delivery and transportation costs could increase the availability and variety of local foods for grantees to purchase. Combined, these changes could tremendously help support grantees and their farm to school programming to ensure their efforts continue over time.

31 Refer to [Expanded Eligibility, Increased Impacts: 10 Cents a Meal 2020–2021 Evaluation Results](#).

32 Refer to [Fiscal Brief: Basics of the Foundation Allowance](#) by the House Fiscal Agency for more information on per-pupil funding.

33 Refer to [Amplifying Impact with More Michigan Farms and Foods: 10 Cents a Meal 2021–2022 Evaluation Results](#).



The main issue we are running into is the cost of delivery because we have so many buildings. We are going to try to combine schools and run them around ourselves to keep down costs. May not be an issue with smaller districts. Delivery costs subtracts from the benefits of using the smaller farms. Giving local farmers grants toward reducing or eliminating delivery costs to the schools would be nice.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

5

Beyond food service, track other farm to school efforts that can impact 10 Cents a Meal participation.

According to research led by the National Farm to School Network, factors like school gardens and education, in addition to local food procurement, are the foundations of a successful farm to school program.³⁴ Evaluation findings show that activities supporting the 10 Cents a Meal program, such as taste testing or nutrition education, are also happening outside of the food service environment in classrooms and other spaces. During the year, grantees reported teachers, community members, and organizations such as FoodCorps as key supporters in their evaluation surveys. The reported activities they led included summer camp activities, school gardens, a farm to school art mural, cooking demos, farmers market–style events, science projects, and classroom curriculum about local foods served at the cafeteria.



The students were so impressed that we heard back from families about how their students were coming home and instructing them on the new vegetable and how to prepare it.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE



Pay attention to the growing seasons. Reach out to local farmers and your agricultural education teacher. Make connections, communicate, and help/volunteer in the classroom. All make menu planning more engaging when you have a more reliable source for produce, a better idea of what is available, and kids want to try.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE



Kitchen staff and administration are completely on board with the purchase of local fruits and vegetables.

— PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTEE

Future evaluation could include specific survey questions to identify what key stakeholders support the 10 Cents a Meal outside of food service. These findings could help explore what kinds of factors influence local food culture in schools and how this can affect the success of a grantee's participation in 10 Cents a Meal. Through this holistic lens, farm to school programs can be supported and sustained over time.

³⁴ Refer to the National Farm to School Network [website](#) and [The Benefits of Farm to School](#) fact sheet for more information about the three core elements of farm to school.

VISION

CRFS envisions a thriving economy, equity, and sustainability for Michigan, the country, and the planet through food systems rooted in local regions and centered on Good Food: food that is healthy, green, fair, and affordable.

MISSION

The mission of CRFS is to engage the people of Michigan, the United States, and the world in applied research, education, and outreach to develop regionally integrated, sustainable food systems.

ABOUT

CRFS joins in Michigan State University's legacy of applied research, education, and outreach by catalyzing collaboration and fostering innovation among the diverse range of people, processes, and places involved in regional food systems. Working in local, state, national, and global spheres, CRFS' projects span from farm to fork, including production, processing, distribution, policy, and access.

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