

The Big Picture: Does 10 Cents Work?

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

The voices of the food program managers (FPMs) participating in 10 Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids and Farms (10 Cents), shared as feedback through evaluation surveys, help us paint a picture of how the program works in action and illustrate how it is reaching towards the two overarching goals set by the legislation:

- 1 to improve daily nutrition and eating habits for Michigan children, and
- 2 to invest in Michigan's agriculture and local food business economy.

In the following summary, we share evaluation findings related to outcomes, impacts, and feedback reported by FPMs as well as their needs to support their continued purchasing and serving of local foods²³ for the 2021-2022 program year.

Outcomes of Participating in 10 Cents

In the last of three evaluation surveys throughout the year (in August), FPMs were asked, "Related to your food service operation, which of the following outcomes has the 10 Cents program helped you to achieve?" FPMs could select all options that applied from a list of outcome statements. Over 200 grantees (212) reported outcomes of the 10 Cents program. For this evaluation report, we consider outcomes as short-term actions or results achieved through participation in 10 Cents.

- FPMs selected an average of three positive outcomes of participating in the program.
- The ranking of these results is almost identical to the previous year (2020-2021) apart from "ability to meet school requirements," which was less common last year and selected by only 16 (13%) grantees.
- Eleven grantees reported that no outcomes were achieved, most often due to their inability to participate in 10 Cents, despite being awarded a grant, due to limited available labor and staff capacity in their food service operation.

²³ Refer to the [Technical Notes](#) to learn more about the response rates and analysis for survey questions.

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

- 1) The variety of produce served in the food service program has increased (102 grantees);
- 2) We can plan local produce and dry bean purchasing with greater certainty (76 grantees);
- 3) Our food purchasing budget increased. (74 grantees);
- 4) Our purchasing power is enhanced. (69 grantees); and,
- 5) We are better able to meet school meal requirements (44 grantees).

Table 9: Outcomes Achieved by Grantees through 10 Cents Participation in 2021–2022

Outcome Statement	Number (percent) of grantees
The variety of produce served in our food service program has increased.	102 (48%)
We can plan local produce and dry bean purchasing with greater certainty.	76 (36%)
Our food purchasing budget has increased.	74 (35%)
Our purchasing power is enhanced.	69 (33%)
We are better able to meet school meal requirements.	44 (21%)
Our food service budget is more stable.	38 (18%)
We have better support for our food service program from the community.	38 (18%)
Food vendors and farmers are more willing to supply our food service program.	36 (17%)
Challenges to purchasing local foods are reduced.	35 (17%)
Food waste has decreased.	34 (16%)
The cooking skills of food service staff have increased.	33 (16%)
Marketing menus is easier.	31 (15%)
Participation in our food service program has increased.	27 (13%)
Other	14 (7%)

Note. n = 212

Impacts of Participating in 10 Cents

In the final August evaluation survey, 212 food program managers (FPMs) also responded to the question, “To what extent are each of the following impacts true for your food service operation since participating in 10 Cents?” 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 majority of grantees agreed (either strongly or somewhat agreed) that **their food program was positively impacted** through participating in 10 Cents, including that they:

- **offered more local fruits** (78% of grantees);
- **offered more local vegetables** (75% of grantees);
- **increased fruit consumption** among students/children (69% of grantees);
- **increased vegetable consumption** among students/children (64% of grantees); and
- **identified new Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans** that are accepted/eaten by the children they serve (60% 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 grants (agreement levels of 4.1 and 4.0, respectively).



Photo Credit: Sarah Rypma

The two impact statements offered about dry beans had the lowest levels of agreement (3.0):

- “we added more dry beans to our menus” and
- “our students/children are eating more dry beans”



This is not surprising given the low levels of purchasing of dry beans, both in dollars and numbers of grantees, as reported by FPMs and shared in the summary, [What Foods Are Served Through 10 Cents](#).²⁴

FPMs were also asked questions related to their participation in 10 Cents and the perceived impact on farmers or local food vendors/suppliers. Results from these questions can be reviewed in further detail in the summary, [How Foods Move Through the 10 Cents Supply Chain](#). In short, over half of responding grantees agreed that participation in 10 Cents allowed them to make new connections with farmers or local food vendors/suppliers and improve existing relationships (52% and 54%, respectively).

²⁴ Learn more about how 10 Cents grantees purchase and serve of dry beans in the report, [All About Beans: A Summary of Legumes in the 2020-2021 Year of 10 Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids and Farms Program](#).

Table 10: Impacts Reported by Grantees through 10 Cents Participation in 2021–2022

Impact Statement	Number of grantees (<i>n</i> = 212)					Average Response
	Strongly agree = 5	Somewhat agree = 4	Neither agree nor disagree = 3	Somewhat disagree = 2	Strongly disagree = 1	
We offered more local fruits.	88	77	31	6	10	4.1
We offered more local vegetables.	84	74	35	11	8	4.0
Our students/children are eating more fruits.	55	91	52	6	8	3.8
Our students/children are eating more vegetables.	47	91	52	6	8	3.8
I have identified new Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and legumes that are accepted/eaten by the children we serve.	48	79	64	13	8	3.7
We added more dry beans to our menus.	15	34	122	24	17	3.0
Our students/children are eating more dry beans.	47	90	61	10	4	3.0

Needs to Support Purchasing and Serving Michigan Foods and Program Feedback

In two evaluation surveys (October, and January), FPMs were asked, “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), FPMs were asked about what they need to support these efforts into the future. Overall, 174 different grantees shared responses about current needs at least once across the first two surveys, and 124 grantees shared responses about future needs in the last survey.

FPMs also provided general program feedback about participating in 10 Cents. Across the year, 156 grantees shared their feedback in surveys, with response themes similar to those for their needs to support efforts to purchase and serve Michigan foods. Evaluators grouped these responses into themes, with highlights of findings described below.²⁵

²⁵ Refer to the [Technical Notes](#) to learn more about the response rates and analysis for survey questions.



I would like to see more info given of which farmers are selling produce, so I don't miss opportunity to buy from them.

— Early care and education grantee

Nearly a quarter of all responses to both questions about current needs and future needs (24% and 27%, respectively) indicated that grantees had no needs at the time. For FPMs who did report needs, **the most prominent response theme was about programmatic support for 10 Cents participation**; this was shared in almost half of all current and future need responses (45% of responses for both). It was also shared in one-third (33%) of all responses about program feedback. While many of these responses were about general training on topics like invoice submission and program requirements, they also included requests for lists of local farms and food vendors, promotional materials for local foods served, and help finding and connecting to sources of local food.



I am new to the process and would like some suggestions for best practice or more specifically some one-on-one time with a consultant to ask questions to increase our participation within the program.

— Public school grantee

QUESTIONS FOR A 10 CENTS FOOD SUPPLIER:

Dazmonique Carr | Owner & Founder, Deeply Rooted Produce

Deeply Rooted Produce is a zero-waste mobile grocery store Detroit, Michigan that prioritizes hyper local produce and Michigan-made value-added products.

They first learned about the 10 Cents program from the Detroit Food Policy Council in addition to learning about it from 10 Cents grantees. They currently distribute local produce to 10 Cents grantees, including early care and education centers. Dazmonique Carr is the owner and founder of the company.

HOW CAN YOU SEE 10 CENTS A MEAL EXPANDING IN YOUR REGION?

More local produce being provided to all childcare facilities and other organization that have access to more families.



WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY CHALLENGE IN UTILIZING 10 CENTS A MEAL?

Communication and clarity around the grantee spending process and how they are to track the funds they spend: some grantees didn't know how the grant would work and didn't know if they could purchase from us thus we only received one order from a 10 cents a meal grantee although we were connected to others.

IS THERE SOMETHING ABOUT THE PROGRAM THAT YOU WOULD CHANGE TO MAKE IT MORE ACCESSIBLE TO ORGANIZATIONS LIKE YOURS IN YOUR REGION?

More consistent conversations with ECEs and schools, maybe a way to share our harvested items directly with the 10 Cents a Meal grantees.

Learn more about Deeply Rooted Produce at www.deeplyrootedproduce.com.

Other common responses included needs related to the food supply chain (22% of all current need responses, 13% of all future need responses, 14% of all feedback responses), such as the desire for larger volumes of local foods to order and purchase, increased and improved delivery options, and increased transparency from vendors about farms of origin for products purchased.



It would be helpful if [our vendor] was better able to pinpoint actual local produce and provide this information to us regularly. I find it is hard to submit required proper documentation...

— Public school district grantee



Our local [vendor] needs to offer a bigger variety of produce and more items that are partially prepped (carrot sticks, for example).

— Public school district grantee



It would be nice if [a vendor] would deliver to us. We are not on their list of places to deliver.

— Public school district grantee

Some FPMs mentioned needs related to their food service operation (8% of all current need responses, 10% of all future need responses, 15% of feedback responses) such as more staff to prepare food and better equipment to prepare and store foods.



At this time, the only thing needed to support our efforts lies on my shoulders. We need more staff. I am in the process of hiring more employees and cannot wait to start ordering in abundance like I have done before.

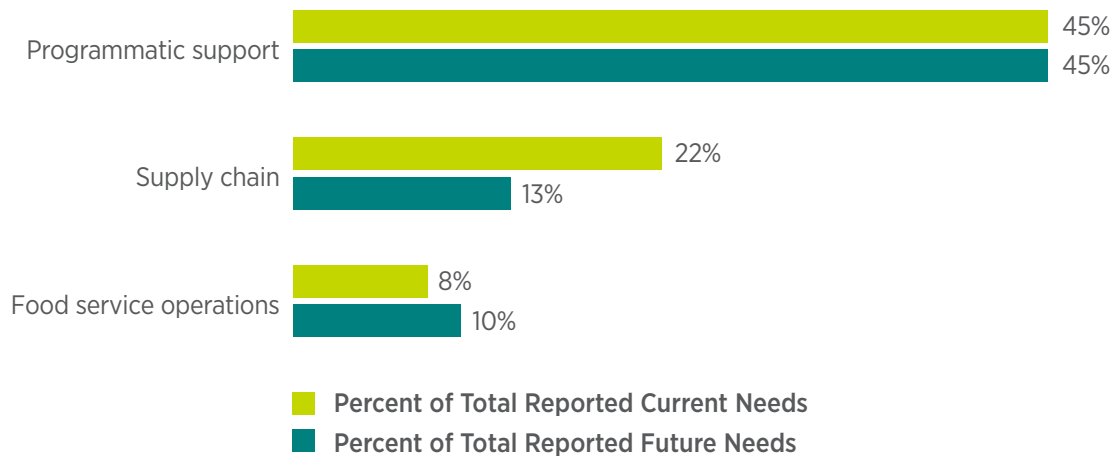
— Public school district grantee



I feel like I have not had the time to invest into the program that I need since the beginning of the school year. We were understaffed the first part of the year, and I spent many weeks working in the kitchen and trying to play catch up with managerial duties. I think it is a great program, but I feel that I lack the proper time for program success.

— Public school district grantee

Figure 13: **Top Current and Future Needs Reported by 10 Cents Grantees in 2021-2022**



Aside from the program feedback already mentioned about programmatic support, food service operations, and the food supply chain, over half (63%, 98 grantees) of all FPMs who shared program feedback responded positively about participating in the 10 Cents program (39% of all responses).

- Most positive feedback was about general support and positive reception towards the program, including a positive impact on food service staff, teachers, and students.
- Other positive responses shared about the benefit of 10 Cents grants to help them **afford more local foods**, and the **positive influence of the program on new and existing relationships** with farmers and local food suppliers.

Highlights from these responses include the following:



Thank you for this opportunity. We purchased about 30% more local fruits and vegetables than we originally planned for. That is the best indication that the program works...

— Public school district grantee



This program has helped us create a better menu...We have added more home cooked items, fresh snacks, and new menu ideas.

— Early care and education grantee



Participating in the 10 Cents program has really encouraged me to purchase some vegetables that I would not have tried otherwise. To my surprise, students have been more willing to try the new vegetables and have given us great feedback as to how they liked them.

— Public school district grantee

Reflection

Across the year, FPMs participating 10 Cents shared important information and feedback that provided insight into how the program works at the grantee level and whether it is reaching towards its legislative goals.

Survey feedback showed the program still has room for improvement to support grantees with their local food purchasing efforts. However, findings also show that many benefits resulted from 10 Cents, per the perceptions of participating FPMs. Grantees reported several different positive outcomes achieved in their food service programs, such as increased purchasing budget to purchase more foods from Michigan farms and food suppliers, as well as impacts, such as serving more Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables.

These findings also reveal opportunities to support local food purchasing by grantees and improve their use of the 10 Cents program by identifying where technical assistance can be provided to meet their needs. Findings can also help local food supporters and partners to understand what grantees seek to support their continued efforts. The needs identified by grantees can also be helpful to farmers and food suppliers who are seeking to increase and improve their business relationships and sell more local foods to grantees. As the program expands, continued evaluation will allow us to follow and document how 10 Cents is reaching toward its goals and the impact it may have on children in school and other settings and Michigan's farms and food businesses.

QUESTIONS FOR A 10 CENTS A MEAL COMMUNITY PARTNER:

Amy Kuras | Research and Policy Program Manager, Detroit Food Policy Council

A local food council is a group that gathers around a specific region to assess and recommend practices or policies that affect the food system.²⁶ Groups like these can help promote and strengthen programs like 10 Cents a Meal.

Since its establishment in 2009, the [Detroit Food Policy Council](#) has worked to influence policy to ensure a sustainable and equitable food system in the city of Detroit. Amy Kuras is the council's Research and Policy Program Manager.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AND THE DAILY ACTIVITIES OF YOUR WORK?

Broadly, I monitor and advocate for policy on the federal state and local level, as well as work on communications, lead our grocery store work on an interim basis, and am running our Summit Planning Committee.

WHO IS INVOLVED OR IMPACTED IN YOUR WORK?

Food system leaders throughout the city of Detroit are most involved in our work, either through our committees, as council members, or partners in our work. We impact the city of Detroit as a whole through working towards equitable policy that benefits all the people of Detroit.

WHAT DRIVES YOU?

As a lifelong Detroiter I care deeply about removing barriers for people of Detroit to survive and thrive while being mindful of the systemic racism and inequality of opportunity we're fighting against. Food access and food sovereignty is particularly important to me as a gardener, cook, and mother. I'm especially concerned about making sure longtime Detroiters have access to the same opportunities as newcomers and are given the respect they are due for keeping the city functioning and neighborhoods connected when systems utterly failed them.

HAVE YOU SEEN WAYS THAT 10 CENTS A MEAL HAS IMPACTED YOUR WORK?

Yes! In response to the opportunities created by 10 Cents a Meal, farmers have done a lot of organizing work around aggregating their produce in order to take advantage of that funding. More abstractly, we have found that organizing around 10 Cents a Meal built support for

²⁶ Definition adapted from the [Michigan Local Food Council Network](#).

a policy benefitted several different sectors of the food system and was something our whole coalition could support. We would use it when working with youth groups as an example of how and why to get involved with policy work. Working with Groundwork to get the policy passed and then expanded was very rewarding and an illustration of how policy successfully goes from idea to fully-funded program.

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

Continued funding and increased messaging about its impact.

ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT 10 CENTS A MEAL?

We're really proud of having helped bring this to fruition and are enjoying watching it play out in Detroit early childhood and K-12 settings.

Learn more about the Detroit Food Policy Council at: www.detroitfoodpc.org.



Photo Credit: Sarah Rypma

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

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

