



A Closer Look at Public School Grantees Participating in 10 Cents

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

For the second year, evaluators explored how key characteristics of public school district grantees may influence their use of the 10 Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids and Farms (10 Cents) program in 2021-2022. Throughout the program's lifespan, public school grantees have been both the greatest in number and eligible to participate in 10 Cents the longest (since it first became a state-funded pilot in 2016-2017), so we focused on that group of grantees to investigate further.

Many variables — including those specific to school food program managers (FPMs) themselves — inform the ways that food service programs at public school districts take shape and are delivered. To begin to better understand how public school district grantees use 10 Cents, we analyzed FPMs' years of experience participating in 10 Cents along with the following key characteristics:

- **Number of outcomes** selected as a result of participating in 10 Cents;
- **Different types of Michigan-grown foods** purchased, tried for the first time, and of interest to purchase in the future;
- **Farms of origin** reported and market channels used for Michigan-grown products purchased; and
- **New connections and improved relationships** with farmers and food vendors.

Additionally, we investigated whether the food service operation type may influence public school grantees' use of the program using FPMs' number of years of experience with:

- **participating in 10 Cents;**
- **purchasing local foods;** and
- **managing their current food program.**



Photo Credit: Sarah Rypma

We also analyzed if there may be some differences between public school district grantees in their use of 10 Cents with some of the same key characteristics used above and their food program type, but this yielded mixed results, as noted below.

Data from the Michigan Department of Education about school food service types were used for this analysis, as well as 10 Cents program data gathered from grantees through evaluation surveys (October, January, August) and their reported purchases of Michigan-grown foods.²⁷ It is important to note that not all FPMs submitted purchasing data, so this analysis only includes the public school district grantees who submitted both purchasing data and responded to surveys (110 of the 206 public school district grantees). Therefore, these results are not generalizable, or representative of all public school grantees. We intend to continue exploring this question in future years of the program so that analyses may more clearly show patterns of how different types of grantees may use the program differently, and the extent to which some of these characteristics of public school grantees, and other types of grantees, may influence that usage.

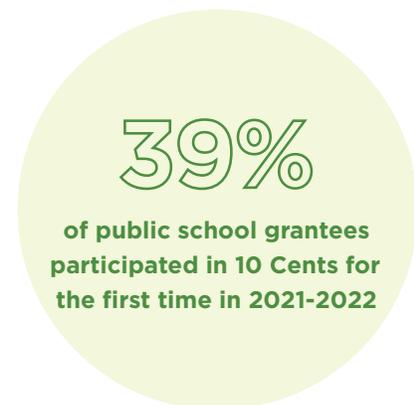
Does the Number of Years of 10 Cents Participation Influence Public School Districts Grantees' Use of the Program?

For 2021-2022, six years was the maximum number of years that a grantee could have participated in 10 Cents.²⁸

Of the public school district grantees who submitted both purchasing data and responded to surveys ($n = 110$), six grantees participated in 10 Cents for all six years that the state-funded program has been in operation, but most grantees (67%) had two years or less experience participating. The program started as a small regional pilot in 2016-2017 with 16 grantees and has grown over time to include 257 grantees this program year. For more information about the number of grantees who participated in each year of 10 Cents, refer to the [Overview](#) summary.

Table 11: Number of Public School Grantees by Years of Participation in 10 Cents in 2021-2022

Years of Participation in 10 Cents	Total Grantees in 2021-2022 ($n = 111$)
1	43 (39%)
2	31 (28%)
3	5 (5%)
4	14 (13%)
5	11 (10%)
6	6 (5%)



²⁷ Refer to the [Technical Notes](#) to learn more about the evaluation surveys and response rates for survey questions.

²⁸ The first year of the state-funded 10 Cents pilot program, in just to regions of the state, was 2016-17.

To simplify our analyses, we grouped grantees into three categories based on their years of participation in 10 Cents: 2 years or less, 3-4 years, and 5 years or more. Survey responses and purchasing information reported by grantees suggests that there may be differences between public school district grantees in their use of 10 Cents depending on their years of experience participating in the program.

Table 12: Characteristics of Public School District Grantees (in the 2021-2022 program year) and Years of Participation in 10 Cents

	Years of Participation of Public School District Grantees		
	2 years or less (n = 75, 68%)	3-4 years (n = 19, 17%)	5 years or more (n = 17, 15%)
Average reported number per grantee over program year			
Outcomes of 10 Cents participation	2.9	3.6	4.9
Different types of Michigan-grown foods tried for the first time*	3.3	1.5	1.2
Different types of Michigan-grown foods of interest	1.6	1.0	0.4
Different types of Michigan-grown products purchased*	7.9	8.8	17.0
Farms of origin ²⁹ reported for Michigan-grown products purchased*	4.7	8.2	9.3
Market channels used for Michigan-grown products purchased*	1.8	1.7	3.2
Percent of responding grantees who affirmed:			
New connections to farmers and food vendors	54%	58%	35%
Improved relationships with farmers and food vendors	54%	79%	65%

Note. n = 110. Response rates vary for each question and more information can be found in the [Technical Notes](#) section.

*Asterisk indicates a statistically significant result (p < 0.05).

Data analyses showed, at a statistically significant level when compared to grantees with 5 years or more experience, that grantees with 2 years or less participating in 10 Cents purchased fewer types of Michigan-grown products, tried fewer new foods, reported fewer farms of origin along with their product purchases, and used fewer market channels to purchase those products.³⁰ Similar to findings from the previous program year (2020-2021), these results may mean, broadly, that grantees with more years of 10

²⁹ Farm of origin is the farm that is the source of a Michigan-grown food purchased through 10 Cents.

³⁰ Refer to the [Technical Notes](#) section for further details on the statistical analyses.

Cents experience have a greater understanding of how to purchase local foods and the local food supply chain, more knowledge about determining the farm of origin when sourcing local foods and/or place greater emphasis on obtaining and understanding this information, and/or a better understanding of how to use a greater variety of local foods in their food programs that serve children.

For this program year, these findings indicate a positive relationship with grantees' use of the program and years of participation in 10 Cents. Public school grantees with 5 years or more of experience participating in 10 Cents reported nearly twice as many different farms of origin (9.3) and more than twice as many Michigan grown products (17.0) as grantees with 2 years or less of experience (4.7 and 7.9, respectively). Other potential positive influences such as the frequency that they purchase Michigan-grown foods, and the number of program outcomes they achieve through 10 Cents, could be further investigated in future program years and across years.

Grantees with 2 years or less participating in 10 Cents purchased fewer types of Michigan-grown products, tried fewer new foods, reported fewer farms of origin along with their product purchases, and used fewer market channels to purchase those products.

Does the Food Service Operation Type Influence Public School Districts Grantees' Use of the Program?

Of the public school district grantees who submitted both purchasing data and responded to surveys ($n = 110$), the majority had self-operated food service programs (69%, 76) and nearly one-third used contracted food service management companies (FSMCs) (31%, 34).

No public school district grantees used vended food service companies, which was expected as this food service type is most commonly used, among schools, in charter or private schools.

- Self-operated food service program:** A food service program that prepares its own meals and manages its own food service operation, including personnel. These types of programs are most often found in school districts.
- Contracted food service program:** A food service program that contracts the preparation of its meals and/or management of its food service operation, sometimes including personnel, to a food service management company.

When compared to all public school grantees, there were similar proportions of food service types among grantees with 2 years or less of participation in 10 Cents (66% self-operated, 71% contracted), however, there was a higher proportion of grantees with self-operated programs who participated for 5 years or more (18% self-operated, 9% contracted).

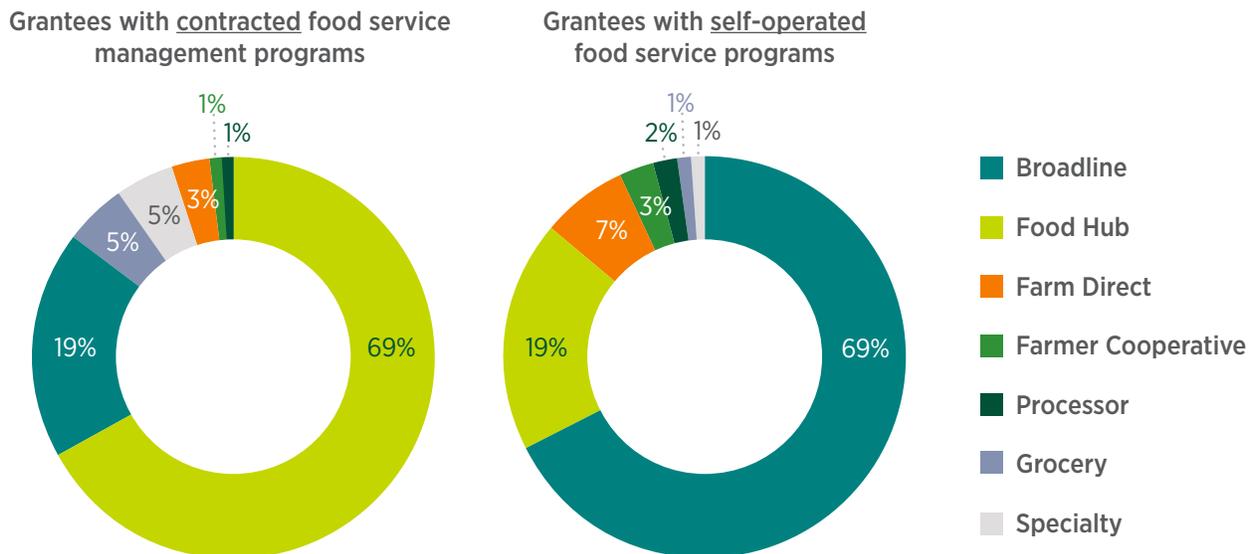
When FPMs' level of experience purchasing local foods and directing their current food service program were also taken into account, analysis showed that public school district grantees differed in the type of food service programs;³¹ grantees with self-operated programs reported less experience with purchasing local foods for their food service program and directing their current food service program than grantees with contracted FSMCs, as seen in the chart below.

Table 13: Years of Experience Reported by Public School Grantees in 2021-2022

Years of Experience	Purchasing Local Foods for Food Programs		Managing their Current Food Program	
	Contracted Food Service (n = 34)	Self-operated Food Service (n = 76)	Contracted Food Service (n = 34)	Self-operated Food Service (n = 75)
2 years or less	29% (10)	41% (29)	32% (11)	47% (35)
10 years or more	41% (14)	22% (17)	24% (8)	13% (10)

Additionally, we found that grantees with self-operated programs spent 61% of all public school districts' reported purchases (in dollars) of Michigan-grown products and grantees with contracted FSMCs spent the remaining 39% of reported purchases. This is to be expected since the majority of participating grantees (69%) had self-operated programs and 31% had contracted FSMCs. However, among both groups of grantees — those with self-operated food service programs and those with contracted FSMCs — they each purchased these products through 7 different market channels, although to different degrees as the figure below shows.

Figure 14: Grantees' Percent Spending (in dollars) by Food Service Type and Market Channel in 2021-2022



31 Refer to [Who is Engaged in 10 Cents](#) for more information about food program manager experience.

Grantees with contracted FSMCs, when compared to grantees with self-operated programs,

- **purchased a higher average number of different products** per grantee (11.4 vs. 8.8),
- **spent more (in dollars) through food hubs** (69% of contracted FSMCs purchases, in dollars) compared to other market channels, followed by broadline distributors (19% of contracted FSMCs purchases), and
- **were less likely to report improved existing relationships** (47% vs. 66%) and slightly less likely to affirm new connections with farmers and food suppliers (50% vs. 59%).

Grantees with self-operated food service programs:

- **spent more (in dollars) through broadline distributors** compared to any other market channel (69% of self-operated purchases, in dollars), followed by food hubs (19%), and
- **purchased directly from farmers to a greater extent** than grantees with contracted FSMCs (7% and 3% of purchases, in dollars, respectively).

These findings may show that grantees with contracted FSMCs are both motivated and ready to use a local food supplier such as a food hub if it is an approved vendor through their FSMC.

Having approved vendors that source and sell Michigan-grown foods may help increase access to these foods for grantees with FSMCs, however this may also result in fewer new connections with new vendors since grantees already have established purchasing relationships for their food service programs. All public school districts, regardless of food service type, source from broadline distributors. However, among grantees with self-operated food service programs, they appear to be more motivated to purchase local foods for 10 Cents through this type of supplier. Additionally, self-operated food service programs may have more flexibility to source from new vendors, including farmers, as seen in the higher rate of spending from farm direct purchases as well as reported new connections and improved relationships to farmers and food suppliers through 10 Cents.

Finally, we asked FPMs about food preparation methods but did not find any results of significance. In future years and over time, an examination of how food preparation methods as well as how other key characteristics of FPMs and public school grantees' food service programs may influence not just purchases of Michigan-grown foods by grantees, but also how they are used or served. Additionally, other characteristics could be explored such as differences between food service program types and their staff capacity to prepare local foods. These findings could yield important results to inform program guidance and training and help us understand more about whether 10 Cents is geared toward meeting its stated goals.

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.