



Hello Farmer!

10 Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids & Farms presents a business opportunity for you and your farm.

How?

10 Cents a Meal is the State of Michigan's competitive grant program run by the Michigan Department of Education that matches what schools, early care and education (ECE) centers, and other eligible organizations that serve kids through federal child nutrition programs spend on Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and legumes with grants of up to 10 cents per meal. That means that there are schools, ECE centers, and more organizations in need of the local, Michigan-grown produce you are growing!

In 2021-2022 the program is being funded at \$4.5 million dollars, because this is a matching grant it doubles the spending meaning that there is potentially a \$9 million market for Michigan-grown food. There are opportunities for farmers of every scale, food hubs, and others in local supply chains. If you've been interested in this market, there is no better time to engage.

Want to get started with exploring the farm to school/farm to ECE market?

Start here:

- Explore 10 Cents a Meal grantees in your area by reviewing the [2021-2022 10 Cents a Meal Grantees interactive map](#) that shows the location of grantees, address information, student enrollment information, etc. This map is also available on our [About page](#) on tencentsmichigan.org
- Focus on relationship building: Reach out, introduce yourself and your interest in providing local produce for them—start the conversation. Have information about your products and services ready.

Think of the benefits you can provide that would help a 10 Cents a Meal grantee be successful or build relationships. For example:

- Offer a farm tour and sampling event to build relationships and trust.
- Host field trips to allow children or food service staff to see where their food came from and learn about agriculture.
- Provide marketing materials to help children and families connect what's on the plate to where it came from.
- Collaborate with customers ahead of season to plan to grow specific items for your customer. E.g Planting carrots for a 10 Cents a Meal grantee who has voiced interest in purchasing your carrots or offering to grow a specific variety of something they can't normally access
- Make the ordering and delivery process as easy as possible.

Learn more at tencentsmichigan.org

Why?

- **Grow a new revenue stream while growing a relationship:** Artesian Farm wanted to help its community access healthy food when schools were out during the COVID-19 shutdown and donated lettuce to New Buffalo Area Schools for families to take home. Now, the school is buying lettuce from the farm on a regular basis for its salad bar and it's a student favorite. [Read about the partnership Artesian Farm and New Buffalo Area School built](#) on our website under success stories.
 - Blue Mitten Farms wanted to grow their customer base for their hydroponic lettuce and looked to 10 Cents a Meal grantees in the Capital Region to expand into the farm to school market first connecting with food service directors with a flyer promoting their products. [Read more](#) on our website under success stories.
- **Create an opportunity to market surplus products or products that would normally go to waste:** In one instance a 10 Cents a Meal grantee was able to market small pollinator apples as “flavor bombs” to serve to students, making use of a byproduct of apple production that usually does not have a use.
 - Another farmer found that small Honeycrisp apples that grocers won't buy are perfect for the school market.
- **Make a positive difference for children in your community:** Selling your products to a local institution means you are having a direct impact on your community and giving kids access to healthy, local food that comes from their own community. One food service director shared *“I think that students, when they eat something and we can tell them that it was grown near here, they relate to that. It is interesting to see.”*

Food Supply Chain impacts

According to 2020-2021 10 Cents a Meal grantees:

- 63% of grantees reported that 10 Cents a Meal allowed them to improve existing relationships with farmers or local food suppliers.
- Nearly half of grantees reported that participation in 10 Cents a Meal allowed them to make connections with new farmers or suppliers.
- One distributor reported that 10 Cents a Meal spurred it to contract with farmers for 50,000 pounds of broccoli, cauliflower, and carrots, compared to just 5,000 pounds last year. The reason: the distributor created a new product called the Michigan Medley to meet 10 Cents a Meal food service needs.
- Top 10 Michigan-grown foods that food service directors said they were interested in but could not always find (in order): Strawberries, cherries, dried or minimally processed legumes, blueberries, asparagus, peaches, corn, lettuce, potatoes, and tomatoes.

Resources

[Tools for Farmers](#) page at tencentsmichigan.org

[Michigan Farm to Institution Network](#)

USDA Fact Sheet: [Selling Local Food to Schools: A Resource for Producers](#)

[Producer Workbook Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers Toolkit](#)

Learn more at tencentsmichigan.org