



SECTION 23

Does the Number of Years Participating in 10 Cents Influence How Public School Districts Use the Program?

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

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

Key Takeaways

5 YEARS **Grantees with 5 years of participation in 10 Cents:**

- Reported the highest number of new Michigan-grown foods tried for the first time (6.3);
- Purchased the highest average number of different products per grantee (16);
- Reported the lowest number of foods they still wanted to try but were unable to find or buy (0.4);
- Used the most market channels (an average of three);
- Were the least likely to affirm new connections with farms and food suppliers (33%) made through the program; and
- Reported more farms of origin for their Michigan-grown products (an average of 11 farms per grantee) than any other type of grantee.

4 YEARS **Grantees with 4 years of participation in 10 Cents:**

- Reported the highest number of outcomes achieved (5.2) from participating in 10 Cents; and
- All affirmed that the program allowed them to improve their relationships with farms and food suppliers.

1 YEAR **Grantees with 1 year of participation in 10 Cents:**

- Used significantly fewer market channels than grantees with 5 years of participation (1.5 market channels versus 2.9); and
- First year grantees purchased the lowest average number of different products (eight products per grantee).

Evaluators wanted to explore 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.

Because public schools make up the greatest number of 10 Cents grantees and have been eligible to participate in 10 Cents for the longest period of time (since the first pilot year of the state-funded program in 2016–2017), we focused on that group of grantees to investigate this question further. We examined program data gathered through evaluation surveys (February, April, June, and August 2021) and grantees’ reported purchases of Michigan-grown foods for the program. Not all food program managers (FPMs) submitted purchasing data, so this analysis only includes the public school district grantees who submitted both purchasing data and responded to surveys (84 of the 113 public school district grantees). While results of this analysis are not generalizable, we intend to continue exploring this question in future years of the program. As more grantees participate and more data are collected, analyses may more clearly show patterns of how different types of grantees use the program differently.

Reporting 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. For 2020–2021, 5 years was the maximum number of years that a grantee could have participated in 10 Cents. Seven grantees participated in 10 Cents for all 5 years, but most public school district grantees (67 grantees) were new to the program in 2020–2021. The full distribution of public school district grantees with key program characteristics for comparison can be seen in Table 23.1.

Grantees with 5 years of participation in 10 Cents reported the highest number of new Michigan-grown foods tried for the first time (6.3) and the lowest number of foods they wanted to try but were unable to find or buy (0.4). This may show that grantees with more years of experience participating in 10 Cents have a greater understanding of how to purchase local foods and may have fewer issues finding products they want to try. Additionally, grantees with 5 years of participation were least likely to affirm new connections with farms and food suppliers (33%) made through the program, but this may be because these more experienced grantees have already established the mix of local food vendors that work for them. They may even have connected with all available farms or food suppliers within their proximity, and/or they may still seek to connect with more farmers and vendors.

Grantees with 5 years of participation in 10 Cents reported the highest number of new Michigan-grown foods tried for the first time.

All grantees with 4 years of participation in 10 Cents affirmed that the program allowed them to improve their relationships with farms and food suppliers. Similar to those with 5 years of participation, these grantees may already have established farmer and/or supplier relationships, but they may still be in development.

Grantees with 4 years of participation reported the highest number of outcomes achieved

Grantees with 4 years of participation reported the highest number of outcomes achieved (5.2), and grantees with 2 years reported the lowest number of outcomes achieved (2). However, it should be noted that there were only three grantees with 2 years of participation, so this is not a reliable comparison. While the outcomes

reported were based on the FPM’s perception and chosen from a preselected list, this may mean that more years of 10 Cents experience increases the FPMs’ understanding of the program’s outcomes and/or their

perception of positive outcomes from it. The percent of grantees that agreed to an outcome statement varied widely among the groups; however, the only outcome that at least a third of all grantees agreed to regardless of their years of participation was “Our food purchasing budget has increased.” Interestingly, only grantees with 1 year of participation did not have the majority agree to, “We can plan local produce and dry bean purchasing with greater certainty.” All other outcome statements had widely varying levels of agreement among the groups of grantees. These results will be interesting to examine further as the program grows.

Of the 84 public school district grantees who reported purchasing information, more than half (54%) had only had 1 year of participation in 10 Cents, and over a third (42%) had 3 or more years of participation in 10 Cents. Those who had 3 years or more of participation in 10 Cents made 47% of reported purchases (in dollars) for all participating public school districts.

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This purchasing information showed that public school district grantees’ use of market channels for their local food purchases varied based on their number of years participating in the program. On average, first year grantees sourced Michigan-grown foods from two market channels and second year grantees used only one market channel, the lowest among all grantee types. On the other hand, grantees with 5 years of participation used the most market channels, with an average of three channels per grantee. A statistical test showed that comparisons between the number of market channels used among public school district grantees with 1 year of participation and public school district grantees with 5 years of participation were statistically significant.¹ In other words, grantees with 1 year of participation in 10 Cents used significantly fewer market channels than grantees with 5 years of participation. This may show that as grantees gain experience with local food purchasing and participating in 10 Cents, they have a greater understanding of the local food supply chain and can access various market channels with greater ease.

Grantees with 5 years of participation were also able to report more farms of origin—an average of 11 farms per grantee—for their purchased products than any other type of grantee. First year grantees were able to provide an average of two farms of origin for their local food purchases. This may show that as grantees

Grantees with 5 years of participation were also able to report more farms of origin—an average of 11 farms per grantee.

gain more years of participation in 10 Cents, they also gain an understanding of how to determine the farm of origin when sourcing local foods and/or place greater emphasis on learning and reporting the farm of origin for their local food purchases, including asking conventional food suppliers for this information. They may also have greater familiarity with some farms of origin for products they purchased if they have maintained relationships with the same farm or food vendor over time.

Purchasing data also showed that public school district grantees’ use of different Michigan-grown products varied based on their years of program participation. Grantees with five years of participation in 10 Cents purchased the highest average number of different products (16) per grantee and grantees with one year of participation in 10 Cents purchased the lowest average number of different products (eight). Perhaps as grantees gain more experience in the program—and more experience purchasing and serving local foods—they also gain a better understanding of how to use a greater variety of local foods in their food programs.

¹ Refer to the [Technical Notes](#) section in the full report for further details on the statistical analyses.

Figure 23.1. Public School District Grantee Trends by Years of Participation in 10 Cents

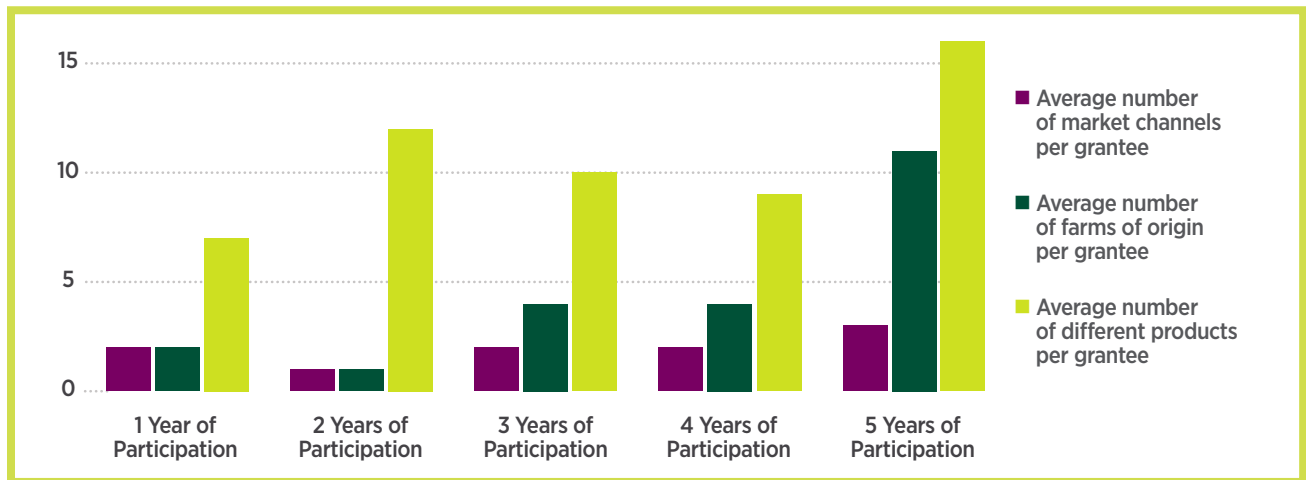
Note: $n = 84$

Table 23.1. Characteristics of Public School District Grantees and Their Years of Participation in 10 Cents

	Average reported number per grantee over the program year				
	Years of Participation of Public School District Grantees				
	1 Year ($n = 45, 54\%$)	2 Years ($n = 3, 4\%$)	3 Years ($n = 17, 20\%$)	4 Years ($n = 12, 14\%$)	5 Years ($n = 7, 8\%$)
Different types of Michigan-grown foods tried for the first time	5.1	3.5	3.3	4	6.3
Different types of Michigan-grown foods of interest	2.2	1	0.7	3.1	0.4
Outcomes of 10 Cents participation	2.5	2	3	5.2	2.6
Percent of total reported purchases by all public school grantees	51%	2%	22%	14%	11%
Different types of products purchased	7	12	10	9	16
Farms of origin for products purchased	2	1	4	4	11
Market channels used for products purchased	2	1	2	2	3
New connections to farmers and food vendors	51%	50%	59%	50%	33%
Improved relationships with farmers and food vendors	46%	57%	68%	100%	86%

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

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