

Cultivate Michigan Meet the Buyers -

Guide to Resource Providers for Farms and Food Businesses

**GREAT LAKES FRUIT, VEGETABLE, AND FARM MARKET EXPO
GRAND RAPIDS, MI
DECEMBER 6, 2023**

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Center for
Regional Food Systems



Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities

Program	Resilient Relationships, Resilient Supply (funded by a USDA Regional Food Systems Partnership grant)
Services Offered	Peer learning network meetings, various scholarships, and technical assistance to partners
Timeframe	Ongoing, through September 2025
Audiences Served/ Reached	Northwest Lower Michigan and West Michigan-based: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Farmers,– Schools,– Early Care and Education (ECE) Sites,– Emergency Food Providers, and– Food Processors, Distributors, and Aggregators
Contact	Melanie Wong Tran, melanie.wong@groundworkcenter.org Christina Barkel, christina.barkel@groundworkcenter.org Jen Schaap, jen.schaap@groundworkcenter.org

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Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)

Program	Economic Development The Economic Development team works to provide expertise in support of growing Michigan's food, agriculture and forest products industries and communities. They strive to have customer service for existing and new businesses while connecting businesses to technical and development resources including funding and financing, regulatory assistance, and international trade.
Grants Offered	Funding through the Food and Agriculture Investment Program and the Wastewater Infrastructure Fund Grant
Timeframe	Continual/ongoing
Contact	Website: www.Michigan.gov/mdard/business-development/grow-your-business Donna LaCourt, LaCourtD2@michigan.gov , 517-614-5518
Program	International Marketing The International Marketing team assists Michigan food and agricultural businesses in developing domestic and international market opportunities to effectively grow their businesses. Through many different trade shows and buyers' missions, the team helps businesses to make connections with international partners to increase both domestic and international success.
Services Offered	Consultation services, market entry, export education, market research, export documentation, and cash reimbursement programs to help your company grow in international markets
Timeframe	Ongoing
Contact	Website: www.Michigan.gov/AgExport Elissa Mutschler, MutschlerE@michigan.gov , 517-275-1309 Holly Gaffney, GaffneyH@michigan.gov , 517-449-8482
Program	Grants The Grants team provides funding opportunities to food, agriculture, and forest products industries through many different grants.
Grants Offered	In the Agriculture Development Division, many grants are available including Farm Innovation Grants, Food and Agriculture Investment Fund Grants, Rural Development Fund Grants, Specialty Crop Block Grants, Value-Added and Regional Food Systems Grants, and a Wastewater Infrastructure Fund Grant.
Timeframe	These grant programs all have different grant cycles and timelines throughout the year; those dates can be found at the website link below.
Contact	Website: www.Michigan.gov/MDARDGrants Heather Throne, ThroneH@michigan.gov , 517-712-0841

Michigan Department of Education

Program	10 Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids and Farms
Grants offered	10 Cents a Meal is a state-funded program that matches what schools and other non-school sponsors spend on Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans with grants of up to 10 cents per meal. Grant amounts are determined by multiplying a year's worth of meals by 10 cents.
Eligibility	Schools and other non-school sponsors that participate in USDA Child Nutrition Programs throughout the state of Michigan
Audiences served/reached	This program is designed to improve daily nutrition and eating habits for Michigan children and invest in Michigan's agriculture and local food business economy. Grantees purchase Michigan-grown foods of their choosing through the purchasing channels that work right for them, which may include farm direct purchases and/or purchases through food hubs and broadline (full-service) distributors.
Services offered	Connections for farmers and food vendors to 10 Cents a Meal grantees for potential sales relationships, training and education about how to sell to schools and other non-school sponsors
Timeframe	Annually available per the annual state budget Grantees for the 2023-2024 school/program year are being notified in November 2023.
Contact	Website: www.tencentsmichigan.org Wendy Crowley, CrowleyW@michigan.gov Cheyenne Liberti, LibertiC@michigan.gov
Program	USDA Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement
Grants and services provided	LFPFA grants were awarded by MDE to subagencies throughout Michigan. Seven subagencies have funding available to purchase food from local growers to distribute to communities in need.
Audiences served/reached	Socially disadvantaged producers and underserved communities in Michigan
Timeframe	Through October 2025
Contact	Amy Viselli, visellia@michigan.gov

Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS)

Services Offered	MIFFS offers a variety of programs and services, including through the USDA 2501 program and GroupGAP training and auditing services through the GroupGAP Network. Their upcoming annual Michigan Family Farms Conference will be held on March 9, 2024 in Kalamazoo, MI.
Audiences Served/ Reached	All farmers and food producers, with a focus on underserved producers
Timeframe	Ongoing
Contact	Website: www.miffs.org Email: info@miffs.org

Michigan On-Farm Produce Safety Team

Services Offered	<p>This team provides produce growers and related stakeholders (such as buyers, market managers, etc.) with educational and on-farm support regarding Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and federal produce safety laws, specifically the FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act) Produce Safety Rule. Currently the team is working on an interactive resource to support produce buyers. The Produce Safety Buyers Handbook was created to demystify produce safety requirements and related certification/regulatory programs in Michigan as well as the North Central and Northeast regions of the United States.</p> <p>The MIOFPS team consists of professionals from Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Conservation Districts (Produce Safety Technicians), and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). Produce Safety Technicians and team members from MSUE focus on technical assistance, education, and on-farm support. Team members from MDARD focus on education and regulation of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule. The team works together to ensure Michigan growers are well-informed about the FSMA produce safety laws and have access to free and confidential on-farm produce safety support.</p>
Eligibility	Produce growers, buyers, and others stakeholders interested in produce safety
Timeframe	Ongoing
Contact	Website: www.miofps.org Produce Safety Buyers Guide: https://buyers.necafs.org Heather Borden, bordenhe@msu.edu Phil Tocco, tocco@msu.edu

Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS) and Fair Food Network

Program	Michigan Good Food Fund (MGFF)
Services and Grants Offered	<p>Financing: This statewide lending network of investors is dedicated to providing flexible funding and tailored business assistance for the food and farm businesses that are vital to a resilient, inclusive, sustainable and healthy food system that supports vibrant and equitable communities</p> <p>2023 Seed Awards: MGFF is offering 5-10 seed awards, which will provide good food entrepreneurs with grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000. The application process is simple; applicants must explain how the funds will help grow their business, prepare for additional financing, and/or otherwise meet business goals. Proposals must be submitted by December 12, 2023, at 5:00 pm (EST).</p>
Timeframe	<p>Financing is ongoing</p> <p>Seed awards applications are due by December 12, 2023</p>
Audiences Served/ Reached	<p>Food and farm businesses, including growers, packers, distributors, grocery retailers, and food entrepreneurs</p> <p>MGFF is committed to working with the range of businesses that grow, process, distribute, and sell food that reaches communities that have been marginalized due to race, ethnicity, and/or gender.</p>
Eligibility	<p>MGFF finances food and farm businesses looking to grow and expand who meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increasing access to affordable, healthy food in communities with low income in Michigan. Preference given to food and farm businesses which are improving people’s access to culturally relevant food, creates jobs, and strengthens local economies – Incorporated in the U.S. – While most of the entrepreneurs we support have been operating for at least one year, we do sometimes work with earlier-stage businesses run by business owners with industry experience or who have contributed their own funds to their startup budget – Profitable or can demonstrate a path to profitability within 12 months – Financing needs are from \$2,500 to \$6,000,000. – Collateral in the form of business and/or personal assets, corporate and/or personal guarantees – Strong, committed management team – Able to provide financial projections for two years including income statements, balance sheets, and cash flow statements
Contact	<p>Website: www.migoodfoodfund.org</p> <p>General Inquiries: https://migoodfoodfund.org/submit/</p> <p>Statewide: Jamie Rahrig, rahrigj1@msu.edu</p> <p>Southeast Michigan: Jazmin Bolan-Williamson, bolanwil@msu.edu</p> <p>Southwest Michigan and Upper Peninsula: Sam Stokes, stokess4@msu.edu</p>

Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS)

Program	Food System Partners Investing in Communities and Entrepreneurs (Food SPICE) (funded by a USDA Regional Food Systems Partnership grant)
Services Offered	Food and farm business sector specific business support including marketing services, accounting services, consulting for kitchen incubator consumer packaged goods makers, product testing, food safety education, and more
Eligibility	Food and farm business entrepreneurs including farmers, packaged food creators, restaurants, cafés, caterers, grocers, aggregators, etc., in Southwest Michigan and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan
Timeframe	Through September 2024
Website	Website: www.canr.msu.edu/food-spice/index Southwest Michigan: Sam Stokes, stokess4@msu.edu
Program	Great Lakes Midwest Regional Food Business Center (funded by USDA)
Grants and Services Offered	Coming in late 2024 - Business Builder Grant awards up to \$100,000 and technical assistance for food and farm business entrepreneurs
Eligibility	Food and farm business entrepreneurs in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin, prioritizing those who have been historically marginalized
Timeframe	Beginning in late 2024 with grant activities to be completed by January 2028
Contact	Website: www.glm-rfbc.msu.edu Email: glm-rfbc@msu.edu
Program	Lake Michigan School Food System Innovation Hub (funded by USDA)
Grants Offered	This program will provide two types of grants for community-driven collaborations that reimagine school meals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Spark Awards (\$10,000-\$75,000) for projects that need a short-term infusion of funds for school food system and marketplace improvements, such as capacity-building, planning, and product testing projects. – Innovation Collaborative Awards (\$250,000) for projects that promote systems-level change of the school food system and marketplace, such as scaling up of programs, regional partnerships, or new program or product development and integration.
Services Offered	Awarded grantees will receive customized technical assistance throughout their grant period.

Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS)

Eligibility	Eligible applicants for collaborative projects include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Farmers — Food producers — Food suppliers — Food distributors — Other food system partners — Schools and school districts, including nonprofit private and charter schools that operate the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Programs — Other organizations, including but not limited to community non-profit organizations, state and local governmental agencies, Native American Tribal Organizations, institutions of higher education, and small businesses
Timeframe	Applications will open in February 2024 for projects to begin August 2024, with additional grant cycles through 2028
Contact	Website: https://innovateschoolfood.org , espanol.innovateschoolfood.org Megan McManus, mcmanu60@msu.edu
Program	Michigan Farm to Institution Network
Services Offered	Helping people across the farm to institution supply chain learn, connect, and collaborate Coming soon - tracking of local food purchases and sales through Cultivate Michigan
Audiences Served/ Reached	Institutional food service buyers and professionals Farmers and food vendors who participate in institutional sales and/or local and regional food supply chains
Timeframe	Ongoing
Contact	Websites: www.mifarmtoinstitution.org , www.cultivatemichigan.org Email: info@cultivatemichigan.org
Program	Michigan Food Hub Network
Services Offered	Connecting farmers and buyers to local food distribution Hubs may provide farm product aggregation and distribution, light processing, multi-farm food boxes, etc.
Audiences Served/ Reached	Farmers, buyers, and current and future food hub operators
Timeframe	Ongoing
Contact	Website: www.canr.msu.edu/michigan_food_hub_learning_and_innovation_network/ Noel Bielaczyc, bielacz1@msu.edu

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) - Michigan Office

Services Offered	Farm loans and beginning farmer resources Note that FSA provides no grants, but they do provide loans and cost-share opportunities.
Timeframe	Ongoing
Audiences Served/ Reached	All producers, new and established
Contact	Website: https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Michigan/index Aimee Swenson: aimee.swenson@usda.gov , 517-449-1623



Photo credit: Sarah Rypma



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This event is brought to you by the Michigan Farm to Institution Network, Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS), Michigan Department of Education, and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Special thanks to the organizers of GLEXPO for helping us bring this popular event back! This event is made possible through a MDARD Specialty Crop Block Grant and generous funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The Michigan Farm to Institution Network is coordinated by the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems with support from MSU Extension. Learn more at foodsystems.msu.edu

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