



SECTION 20

# Feedback About Participating in 10 Cents a Meal

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

Grantees provided generally **positive feedback** (36% of total feedback mentioned) about participating in the 10 Cents program, with some noting the benefits:



**Extra funding**



**The ability to try new foods**



**Better quality of local fruits, vegetables, and dry beans** (73% of grantees)

29%

Other common feedback (29% of total feedback mentioned) focused on **program improvements in the administration of 10 Cents**, such as simplifying the processes for submitting invoice information for local food purchases.

17%

Grantees also provided feedback (17% of total feedback mentioned) on **the perceived operational challenges related to purchasing and serving local foods**, such as the desire for more local farmers and suppliers from which to purchase local foods.

11%

A small percentage (11% of total feedback mentioned) of the total feedback mentioned noted the **negative influence and challenges** of the ongoing pandemic on participation in 10 Cents.

In the April, June, and August evaluation surveys, grantees participating in 10 Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids and Farms (10 Cents) were asked, **“Please describe any additional feedback about participating in 10 Cents that you would like to share. Please include any concerns, negative feedback, and ideas for program improvement, should 10 Cents continue in future years.”** One hundred four grantees provided feedback at least once during all three surveys. The response rate for the April survey was 59% (77 grantees provided feedback out of 130 who took the survey), the response rate for the June survey was 60% (76 grantees provided feedback out of 127 who took the survey), and the response rate for the August survey was 68% (65 grantees provided feedback out of 96).

Evaluators categorized the text entries based on common themes. Because a single grantee's response could have multiple themes, the number of mentions to themes was often higher than the actual number of responses.<sup>1</sup> Themes, the number of times a theme was mentioned, and the number of different grantees that mentioned that theme are detailed in Table 20.1.

**Table 20.1. Reported Feedback by 2020–2021 10 Cents Grantees**

Themes	Number of mentions (201 total)	Number of grantees
<b>General positive feedback</b>	72 (35.8%)	57
<b>Administrative program improvements</b>	58 (28.9%)	48
<b>Operational challenges</b>	35 (17.4%)	29
<b>Influence of the pandemic</b>	22 (10.9%)	22
<b>Positive impact on schoolchildren, staff, and farmers</b>	11 (5.5%)	11
<b>Food variety and quality</b>	3 (1.5%)	3

Note:  $n = 115$

<sup>1</sup> See [Technical Notes](#) in the full report for a detailed explanation of open-text response analysis.

Overall, grantees provided primarily positive feedback (57 grantees, 36% of total mentions) about participating in the 10 Cents program. Comments included the benefits of extra funding, the ability to try new foods, and better quality of local produce.

Another common theme was program improvements related to the administration of 10 Cents (48 grantees, 29% of total mentions). This feedback focused on simplifying the processes for submitting invoice details through the online platform to track local food purchases. For the 2020–2021 year, grantees could not upload copies of their invoices as is. Instead, grantees had to upload a specific invoice template or manually enter specific purchasing information. Many grantees felt that this was labor-intensive and took too much of their time.

Grantees also provided feedback (29 grantees, 17% of total mentions) on operational challenges related to purchasing and serving local foods. FPMs mentioned needing more local farmers and suppliers from which to purchase, improved vendor processes, and more minimally processed items due to staff labor required to prepare certain local foods.

Additionally, grantees commented (22 grantees, 11% of total mentions) on the negative influence and subsequent challenges of the ongoing pandemic on participation in the 10 Cents program. Less common themes included the high quality of local food and the positive impacts of the program on schoolchildren, staff, and farmers.

## Response Highlights

### GENERAL POSITIVE FEEDBACK



Part of our initiative is to serve local produce as much as possible, so having this grant has allowed us to do that more often. The cost of local can sometimes cost more so having the additional funds offsets that cost.



The extra money coming back helps schools' budgets, local farmers and families, students, the local economy, the entire state of Michigan.



It would be ideal to be able to use the 10 cent grant again. We love it. We love the marketing tools you have given us to use on social media to let us promote our program.



It was fun to see what fruits and vegetables that we already had been using and new fruits, vegetables and legumes we have started using that were from Michigan.



The 10 Cent program has helped us offset losses that we are having due to COVID pandemic.

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS FOR 10 CENTS



Less paperwork would be extremely helpful - if we could simply submit our invoices instead of having to transfer the information into a specific 10 Cents A Meal spreadsheet, which includes information that we need to look up each month (like the county of the farm where the produce comes from) it would be much less labor-intensive to participate. We are a small nonprofit with minimal staff, and this would make it much easier to choose to participate in the future.



It is difficult to breakdown the invoices, then count the meals and to put them with the billing sometimes slows down the process because we are rural, small and I am the only one doing all of these tasks.



Great program but some items [it] can be very labor intense. Some funding to purchase equipment to help with the prep work would be fantastic!

## OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES RELATED TO PURCHASING AND SERVING LOCAL FOODS



It would be helpful if local producers sent pricing information and availability to our kitchen staff to order.



I do not have the time to connect with individual farmers. I need access to a food hub in order to gain better access to local produce.

## NEGATIVE INFLUENCE OF THE PANDEMIC



During COVID, it is difficult to do 'activities' around 10 Cents, as we cannot have visitors into the schools and such, so we have very limited time with the students.



This year was a little more difficult due to COVID and not serving meals in our cafeterias. I was not able to offer as much variety as I would have liked.



I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this program, however, due to the pandemic, I feel that we are limited in how creative we can be at this time.

## POSITIVE IMPACT ON SCHOOLCHILDREN, STAFF, AND FARMERS



This is a wonderful program that in years past has given us the opportunity to make a huge difference in the types of fruits and vegetables that are showcased to the kids as well as build relationships with local farmers.



It had a very positive impact on not only the students but the staff. I feel the staff was excited, which made them excited to get more involved with encouraging students to try different items and talking about healthy eating during lunch.



I also send a whole, raw item to each class so the students can see and touch what the item looks like prior to us prepping it. This activity has gotten the teaching staff involved and has built up excitement with the students.

## QUALITY OF LOCAL FRUITS, VEGETABLES, AND DRY BEANS



As a first-time participant this last school year, we have noticed that the local fruits and vegetables we purchased were of great quality and tasted better than products that were not Michigan-grown.



I am able to broaden my menu choices and give better fresher quality products to the students.



Evaluation of 10 Cents is led by the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS). The work presented here is part of *10 Cents a Meal 2020–2021 Evaluation Results: Expanded Eligibility Increased Impacts* by Colleen Matts and Megan McManus of CRFS and was generously funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and 10 Cents administrative funds for partner organizations.

To learn more, visit [tencentsmichigan.org](https://tencentsmichigan.org), [foodsystems.msu.edu/10-cents-a-meal](https://foodsystems.msu.edu/10-cents-a-meal), and [mifarmtoschool.msu.edu](https://mifarmtoschool.msu.edu).

