



# Farmers Market Food Navigators

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Michigan Fitness Foundation





**Access to  
Local  
Produce**

**Food  
Assistance  
Programs**

**Existing  
Barriers  
Remain**

## Farmers Markets in Low-Income Communities





**Nutrition  
Education**

**Incentives  
for Produce**

**Sustainable?**

## Existing Farmers Market Programs





# Program Development

Collaboration of MFF and the  
Michigan Farmers Market  
Association





Help Low-Income Shoppers Maximize Their Food Dollars



# Provide Nutrition Education & Resources

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# Community Outreach



**MEET ME**

**AMY ST. GERMAIN**

Food Navigator  
Muskegon Heights City Market



**FAVORITE FRUIT**

**“Peaches are my favorite fruit. They are sweet, juicy and taste like summer to me.”**

*Amy St. Germain*

**FAVORITE VEGETABLE**

**“I love butternut squash. It’s a versatile vegetable that can be used for any meal.”**

*Amy St. Germain*

**JOIN ME**

Muskegon Heights City Market  
99 East Center St, Muskegon Heights  
Friday from 11-3

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# Implement Policy, Systems, and Environmental Strategies Supportive of Healthy Behaviors





# Food Navigators in Action



# Outcomes



Farmers markets can increase access to fresh, healthy foods within a community, while supporting local farmers. When farmers market vendors accept food assistance benefits, fresh produce is more affordable and allows low-income families to stretch their food dollars while eating a healthy diet. Low-income residents can face barriers to shopping at farmers markets, even markets located in underserved communities that accept food assistance.

The Farmers Market Food Navigator program addresses barriers that low-income shoppers face, like building confidence in talking with vendors, selecting produce, and using new foods.

## WHAT DOES A FOOD NAVIGATOR DO?



### NUTRITION RESOURCES

Provide resources and experiential nutrition education to shoppers at markets, including tastings and cooking demonstrations, that help support healthy eating habits.

### HELP SHOPPERS

To effectively use their food dollars at markets through tours that can include introductions to vendors, tips, and providing support.



### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Build awareness of farmers markets and increase awareness of food assistance programs at markets.

### INCREASE ACCESS

Work with market managers and vendors to implement policy, systems, and environmental changes supportive of healthy behaviors.



A Farmers Market Food Navigator Playbook was developed to provide structure and direction on each key function of the Food Navigator role and provide guidance to market managers and community partner organizations. The Playbook was designed to provide enough structure for food navigators to implement the program as intended and achieve expected outcomes, while still allowing for flexibility to ensure the program is relevant to the context of the individual farmers markets and the communities they serve.

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING...

### FOOD NAVIGATORS



In one market season, **Food Navigators:**  
Assisted an average of **70** shoppers per day  
Engaged with approximately **7,500** shoppers



**Playbook Monthly Game Plan feedback**  
"The Playbook is very helpful in figuring out my role, & I consistently use it as a resource for activity ideas and ways to improve." — Food Navigator

According to market managers surveyed, **Food Navigators** often helped shoppers by:



Providing tools or resources they could take home **100%**



Sharing nutrition information with them **83%**



Showing them how to use their food assistance benefits **83%**

### MARKET STAFF



"Having the Food Navigator Program was beneficial for our Market!" — Market Manager

"I enjoy watching people enjoy the program. It is great program." — Farmers Market Vendor



**83%** of market managers and **59%** of market vendors agreed Food Navigators helped increase fruit and vegetable sales.



**67%** of market managers and **83%** of market vendors agreed activities like food tastings, recipe demonstrations, and children's activities helped increase fruit and vegetable sales.

### COMMUNITY MEMBERS



Surveys show that after consumers interact with food navigators, nearly one-third (29%) eat vegetables more often than they did before.



Shoppers who engaged with Food Navigators intended to:



Shop at a farmers market **70%**



Eat a variety of vegetables **50%**



Eat more vegetables **47%**



Buy more vegetables **45%**

### FOOD NAVIGATORS USE THE PLAYBOOK TO...

- Learn about their role and the purpose of the program
- Refer to training and resources
- Gain inspiration from Monthly Game Plans
- Plan their activities with Proposed Activity Schedules
- Carry out program evaluation
- ...and much more!



Follow the program! Find out more at: [michiganfitness.org](http://michiganfitness.org)

© 2018 Michigan Fitness Foundation, updated 2020. The Farmers Market Food Navigator program was first introduced in 2016 and was developed as a collaboration of the Michigan Fitness Foundation (MFF) and the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA). This project was funded in whole or in part by the United States Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and the Michigan Fitness Foundation. These institutions are equal opportunity providers.



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## Measuring Behavior Change



Surveys show that after consumers interact with food navigators, nearly one-third (**29%**) eat vegetables more often than they did before.







SNAP-Ed  TOOLKIT



## Next Steps



Email:

[resources@michiganfitness.org](mailto:resources@michiganfitness.org)

Website:

<https://michiganfitness.org/food/farmers-market-food-navigator>





# Questions?

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