

FARMERS MARKET FOOD NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

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.

IMPLEMENT POLICIES

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 **53** shoppers per day
Engaged with approximately **7,700** shoppers

Playbook Monthly Game Plan feedback



"The Playbook is very helpful. It's where I start for my activity prep to get a visual map for the month." – Food Navigator



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



Providing tools or resources they could take home **55%**



Sharing nutrition information with them **50%**



Showing them how to use their food assistance benefits **40%**

MARKET STAFF



"It benefits the market in increasing our educational initiatives. Our navigator also brought new customers to the market through community outreach." – Market Manager



"Demos & recipes are very helpful." – Farmers Market Vendor



50% of market managers and **57%** of market vendors agreed Food Navigators helped increase fruit and vegetable sales.



75% of market managers and **51%** of market vendors agreed activities like food tastings, recipe demonstrations, and children's activities helped increase fruit and vegetable sales.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS



47% of shoppers recalled engaging with a Food Navigator.



50% of shoppers bought fruits and/or vegetables they hadn't planned to buy after participating in cooking and nutrition demonstrations with the Food Navigator

Shoppers who engaged with Food Navigators intended to:



Shop at a farmers market **80%**



Buy more vegetables **50%**



Eat more vegetables **52%**

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