

Michigan Food Hub Learning and Innovation Network Information Sheet

What are food hubs?

Food hubs are centrally located facilities with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally sourced food products (USDA-AMS working definition). Food hubs can be operated as a private business, a non-profit organization, as well as other organizational forms.

Who is partnering in this work and why?

The MSU Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS) and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) are partnering to integrate food hub and regional food commerce resources to help Michigan regional food and farm businesses succeed. The initial resources in this partnership are: 1) Funding from MDARD in 2012 and 2014 for multiple food hub projects, 2) coordinated technical assistance, and 3) a Michigan Food Hub Learning and Innovation Network led by CRFS in collaboration with Morse Marketing Connections, LLC, and MDARD.

What are the goals of the Michigan Food Hub Learning and Innovation Network?

1. Increased learning, innovation, and profitability for participating food hub and other regional food businesses
2. Increased access to food hub financial and technical assistance, research, and education
3. Increased business to business collaboration and trust across food hubs and other regional food businesses
4. Measureable increase in healthy food access to low-income communities and vulnerable children in order to increase health outcomes
5. Increased collaboration among food and health agencies and organizations in Michigan to support food hubs

What are the roles of Michigan local food hub facilitators and where are they serving?

1. Help support, connect, and convene those who are interested in developing or assisting with the development of a food hub in your region
2. Increase awareness of food hubs within those organizations working to get healthy food to low-income communities in your region
3. Assess whether food hubs can play a role in supplying healthy food to those markets in your region

There are currently six food hub part-time facilitators serving throughout Michigan. The Local Food Hub facilitators' contact information, biographies, and a map of their regions are available at:

foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/michigan_food_hub_network_facilitator_bios



What is the Michigan Food Hub Learning and Innovation Network doing?

1. Convening three to four statewide food hub network meetings per year to create a “space” for learning and innovation in food hubs and regional food commerce
2. Maintaining a statewide listserv and an information page on the CRFS website
3. Coordinating a network of local food hub coordinators who are working with local partners to build capacity of food hubs
4. Responding to emerging food hub needs through regional and local food hub meetings, conferences, learning sessions, webinars, trainings, and context-specific tool development
5. Engaging and recruiting food hubs led by traditionally marginalized farmers and organizations representing food and health needs of low-income communities to participate and have leadership opportunities in all aspects of the network
6. Developing a best practices guide for developing successful Michigan-based food hubs and other regional food businesses (2015)
7. Developing a case study guide for developing a statewide food hub learning and innovation network (published by Center for Regional Food Systems, 2014)

What is the National Food Hub Collaboration and how is it connected to the Michigan Food Hub Learning and Innovation Network?

The National Food Hub Collaboration is a partnership between Wallace Center at Winrock International, USDA, National Good Food Network, and others. The Michigan Food Hub Network partners with the Collaboration to connect Michigan food hubs and other food businesses with educational, technical, and financial resources and expertise available across the country. MSU CRFS also is the university partner in the National Food Hub Survey.

Contact the Michigan Food Hub Learning and Innovation Network co-conveners:

Rich Pirog, Senior Associate Director
MSU Center for Regional Food Systems
e-mail: rspirog@msu.edu
phone: 517-353-0694

Marty Gerencer, Principal
Morse Marketing Connections, LLC
e-mail: marty.gerencer@gmail.com
phone: 231-638-2981

Michigan Food Hub Learning and Innovation Network Webpage:

foodsystems.msu.edu/activities/food-hub-network

Statewide Contact List:

foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/mi-fh-contacts

Resources on Food Hubs:

ngfn.org/resources/food-hubs

To subscribe to the listserv for the Michigan Food Hub Learning and Innovation Network, email listserv@list.msu.edu with "SUB MIFoodHub" and your name (e.g., SUB MIFoodHub Joe Smith) in the body of the email

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