



2018 Advocacy Priorities

The Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) is a statewide, member-based association with a mission to advance farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products. To accomplish this mission, our work includes advocacy. MIFMA supports and advocates for policies at the federal, state and local levels that expand opportunities for direct market farmers and businesses, support the farmers market industry, contribute to vibrant communities, and sustain the environment.

MIFMA represents more than 480 members, including more than 210 farmers and food and ag-based businesses that sell at farmers markets, as well as more than 140 farmers markets that contribute to the economic viability of more than 3,000 farmers and food and ag-based businesses.

Goal:

Increase member engagement with, and participation in, MIFMA's advocacy efforts, and increase MIFMA's support for members' own advocacy issues within communities throughout the state.

Objective:

- * To educate members on MIFMA's advocacy priorities, and how they can get involved.
- * To create and increase opportunities for members to engage in advocacy efforts at MIFMA events, including the Farmers Markets at the Capitol.
- * To support and empower members in their own advocacy efforts.

Action:

- * Send monthly advocacy updates to members by email.
- * Review and post advocacy tools and resources in the Membership Portal.

Goal:

Support policy initiatives within the state of Michigan that advance and improve farmers markets.

Objectives:

- * To increase the awareness and consumption of value-added products that highlight Michigan's diverse agricultural industry.
- * To support policies that enable food entrepreneurs to use Michigan grown and produced products.
- * To create new opportunities for promoting farmers markets, food and ag-based businesses and Michigan grown and produced products.

Action:

- * Support legislators in the introduction and passage of a bill to create licensing that allows the sale of beer and spirits that feature Michigan grown and produced ingredients at farmers markets.
- * Support legislators in the introduction and passage of a bill to increase the number of wineries that are eligible for the farmers market license by increasing the production threshold limit.

Goal:

Support initiatives, including food assistance programs, that ensure access to fresh, nutritious, local foods available at Michigan farmers markets.

Objectives:

- * To advocate for maintaining and/or expanding funding for food assistance programs that can be, or could be in the future, redeemed at farmers markets. For example, supporting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) referred to as WIC Project FRESH in Michigan; the Senior FMNP referred to as Senior Project FRESH/Market FRESH in Michigan; WIC Cash Value Benefits; Prescription for Health style programs; and Hoophouses for Health.
- * To support programs and collaborate with organizations that work to increase consumers' access to nutritious, locally produced foods through farmers markets. For example, supporting Fair Food Network's Double Up Food Bucks program partially funded through the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) program and Michigan Nutrition Network's SNAP-Ed nutrition education program.
- * To support federal and state initiatives that increase the capacity of, or reduce the barriers for, farmers and farmers markets implementing food assistance programs.

Action:

- * Support implementation of funding allocated in the State of Michigan's FY18 budget to provide no-cost wireless point of sale devices to farmers markets and direct marketing farmers accepting SNAP benefits and share the impact this funding has on food access in Michigan.

Goal:

Establish relationships with legislators and other food and farming organizations in alignment with our mission to advance farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products.

Objective:

- * To identify and align with initiatives and organizations with clearly stated advocacy priorities including, but not limited to, the Michigan Good Food Charter, Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan, Michigan Alliance to Stop Hunger, and the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC).
- * To advocate for maintaining and/or expanding the funding essential to the farmers market community including, but not limited to, the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Programs, Specialty Crop Block Grant program, the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, and the Value Added Producer Grant, and the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Grant program (SARE).

Action:

- * A MIFMA representative will serve on the Michigan Good Food Charter steering committee. MIFMA staff will participate in the Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Community Policy Action Team for Healthy Food Access, the Michigan Alliance to Stop Hunger, and in multiple committees within NSAC.
- * On any bill that MIFMA supports, the Advocacy Committee will (1) identify the bill sponsor(s); (2) have a committee member contact the legislator(s) to share our Advocacy Priorities and express our support of the legislation; (3) ask the bill sponsor(s) which committee the bill will be referred to and how MIFMA can support bill advocacy. For example, MIFMA may testify at committee hearings, contact committee members to express support and/or host or participate in media events to bring awareness to the legislation.
- * Educate our members on which legislators are in key positions to support our advocacy priorities and guide our members in how they can strengthen their relationships with those decision-makers.

For more information about MIFMA's advocacy priorities and accomplishments visit www.mifma.org/get-involved/advocacy-efforts/.