

# MEASURING MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKETS VOLUNTEER HOURS



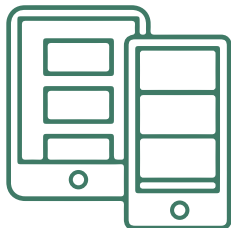
## HOW TO COLLECT YOUR DATA

### 1. Prepare for data collection

Tracking volunteer hours can help you understand the amount and type of volunteer labor at your market for future planning purposes and to communicate your community's investment in the market. The first step in tracking volunteer hours will be to decide how you are going to record all volunteer hours that occur both at the market and those completed outside of the market day.

It is recommended to keep a volunteer log or volunteer sign-in sheet at the market to help keep track of hours during a busy market day. Sign-in sheets will also serve as an attendance record for reporting community service hours and to have on hand in case something happens in which you need to know who was at the market on a specific day.

An example volunteer sign-in/sign-out sheet is provided on the next page. This sheet can be printed and used to collect your data each market day.



Alternatively, an **online electronic form such as Google Form** can be used that volunteers can complete each market day from any **smartphone or tablet** at the market. The Google Form responses will then automatically be entered into a Google spreadsheet eliminating the need to enter your data electronically post-market. Volunteer hours can also easily be recorded as part of your daily Market Day Report.

It is recommended to have a process established not only for volunteers working during the market day, but for those performing tasks outside of the market day as well.

Volunteers could report their hours via email or by using an online electronic form on a set frequency period, such as weekly or monthly, or once an assigned task is finished. Regardless of the method, volunteers should be informed of the process and what is expected of them.

Electronic forms can also be a great way for volunteers working outside of the market day to report their hours.

### 2. Record your data!

Use your volunteer log, sign-in/sign-out sheet, or electronic form to track your volunteer hours on each market day. Having volunteers fill out the form directly will mean one less task you will need to keep track of during the market day. Be sure all volunteers are tracking their hours, including unpaid representatives of the market such as volunteer board members, and that you are checking in with volunteers performing tasks outside of the market day to ensure their time is also captured.



# HOW TO STORE, AGGREGATE, AND ANALYZE YOUR DATA

Try using [MIFMA's Data Entry Excel Template](#) for data storage.

## Store your data

If you used paper to collect your volunteer hour data, we recommend transitioning the data to an electronic file after each market day as part of your market close-out activities as paper record logs are susceptible to being lost, damaged, or accidentally discarded. [An Excel or Google Spreadsheet works well for storing this data.](#) If you used an online form to collect vendor attendance, then your data should already be entered into an electronic file!

## Aggregate your data

At the end of the season, calculate your total volunteer hours by adding together all your volunteer hours over the course of the season. Additionally, total volunteer hours can be broken down into each task category, such as setup/breakdown help or marketing and outreach to help your market understand where volunteers are providing the most value.

Using an Excel spreadsheet can help make these calculations easier. Examples of these types of calculations are pre-populated in [MIFMA's Data Entry Excel Template](#).

## Analyze the data

Take a look at your market data at the end of the season and try to identify trends that would help you create a picture of the volunteer labor at your market for future planning purposes. Did your market utilize additional volunteer hours this season than in past years? Where are volunteers having the greatest impact? At what timeframe during the market season do you utilize the most volunteer hours? Creating graphs and/or charts of your data can also be helpful when identifying trends.



To quantify the value your volunteers have made to your market and your community's investment in the market, convert your volunteer hours into a dollar value by multiplying your total volunteer hours by the current estimated value of volunteer time reported by the Independent Sector.<sup>1</sup>

# HOW TO PRESENT YOUR FINDINGS

## Report your findings

Consider publishing your data in a report to share with a variety of audiences. Think about what information your sponsoring organization, market sponsors, vendors, market shoppers, etc. might like to know or what you are asking of them and build your report based on the audience you plan to share it with.

Try using [MIFMA's report and/or infographic templates](#) to share your data.

## Share your findings!

Share your report and/or infographics with your target audience and congratulate yourself on a job well done!

<sup>1</sup>Additional information on the value of volunteer time: <https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>