MICHIGAN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

Slate of Candidates: 2026 MIFMA Board of Directors

Community-Driven Marketplace Representatives

Alexander Steward (Incumbent) | Alexander Steward has been involved with several Michigan Farmers Markets for many years, currently serving as the Market Manager of the Westside Farmers' Market in Ann Arbor and the Market Assistant at the Farmington Farmers & Artisans Market. He completed the MIFMA Farmers Market Manager Certification Program in 2018 and has participated in numerous MIFMA programs and events, including presenting multiple times at the Michigan Farmers Market Conference.

Alexander currently serves as Chair of the MIFMA Advocacy Committee. He is the proud graduate of Schoolcraft College and the University of Michigan - Dearborn. Additionally, Alexander has served for over a decade as a Community Events Organizer in Southeast Michigan.

Brian Shier | Brian Shier serves as the Market Manager at the Downtown Marquette Farmers Market. He is a graduate of MIFMA's Market Manager Certificate Program and has previously shared his expertise in MIFMA webinars. He says that managing a large, established market has given him insight into long-term sustainability, vendor relationships, and operational efficiency, while his work managing newer markets and assisting other U.P. markets has kept him closely connected to the challenges faced by smaller or developing markets.

Brian says, "The opportunity to represent Upper Peninsula markets and contribute a U.P. perspective to statewide conversations is important to me. I believe MIFMA plays a critical role in strengthening markets across Michigan, and I am eager to help guide and support that work more formally."

Farmers and Vendors

Sarah Longstreth (Incumbent) | Sarah has extensive experience as a farmer and vendor, including 15 years of being a farmers market vendor, 17 years of being a vegetable and livestock producer, 12 years of being a certified organic producer, and 12 years of being a small business owner and farm and people manager. She is a farmer mentor through Marbleseed's Farmer-to-Farmer Mentorship and works with Taste the Local Difference to get local produce into Midland school cafeterias and educate students.

Sarah says, “I value farmers markets as one of our few true public, community spaces. They offer important startup opportunities to small producers, and they can offer an inclusive environment for which consumers can build meaningful relationships with farmers and other food producers, bringing them several steps closer to the food they feed their families.” Currently, she is a vendor at the Midland Farmers Market and operates a CSA program.

Suzannah Barrie (Incumbent) | Suzannah has over 25 years of business experience learned through starting her own farm, becoming a vendor, and completing MIFMA’s Market Manager Certificate Program. She served for several years first as the secretary of the Caledonia Farmers Market before spending over a decade as the president before resigning in late 2023.

Suzannah says, “As a female farmer, vendor, and market manager, the information I've received throughout the years of working with MIFMA has been indispensable in my various positions with Michigan farmers markets and I truly enjoy having such an organization with proper knowledge that has helped me to exceed in these areas.”

Professional

Amy Fisher (Incumbent) | Amy Fisher currently serves as the Dean of Business and Professional Studies at Mid Michigan College. In her role as dean, Amy oversees the Business & Accounting programs at the college as well as the Criminal Justice, Early Childhood Education, and Computer Information Systems. Amy also works with international students and directs the LUCES program at Mid.

Prior to her role as dean, Amy served as a Senior Business Consultant with the Mid-Michigan region of the Small Business Development Center. During her time with the SBDC Amy obtained her Certified Global Business Professional (CGBP) designation as well as her Certified Small Business Consultant (CSBC) certification. Prior to joining the team at Mid Michigan College Amy worked in the Risk Management and Insurance field. Amy obtained her Bachelor of Business Administration from Saginaw Valley State University and her Masters of Science in Administration with a concentration in Leadership, from Central Michigan University.

In addition to her degrees, Amy also has obtained her Graduate Certificate in College Teaching from Central Michigan University. Amy currently lives in Midland Michigan with her husband Jim and their dog Bella. Together they have four children who live throughout the beautiful state of Michigan.

Kendra Wills | Kendra has served as a Michigan State University Extension Educator in the West Michigan area for the last 27 years. In her current role with the MSU Product Center, she provides business counseling to Michigan-based entrepreneurs seeking to start or expand their packaged food or beverage ventures. She hopes to support MIFMA by leveraging her professional network, experience working with food and agricultural entrepreneurs, and grant writing expertise.

Kendra says, “Throughout my career, I have managed numerous grants totaling more than $3 million, demonstrating a strong track record of program leadership and resource development. I am committed to contributing my experience and expertise to support MIFMA and to strengthen farmers markets across the state.”

Prashanti Boinapally (Incumbent) | Dr. Prashanti Boinapally is the Director of Programs and Quality with Authority Health and has experience as a partner with MDHHS and Eastern Market in various programs related to food. In addition to her current position, she has an educational background as a medical doctor along with 20 years of public health experience in various roles across the State of Michigan.

Prashanti is a member of MIFMA's Racial Equity Committee where she has learned more about MIFMA's work. She says, "I strongly believe public health work needs to be integrated into the clinical world for better patient outcomes. I look forward to playing a role on the MIFMA Board of Directors to help me achieve some of my goals."

Rachel Bair (Incumbent) | Rachel managed the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Market in 2008 and was active in MIFMA's early work to expand SNAP access at markets. From 2010-2015, she was a program manager and director at Fair Food Network, again working with MIFMA and farmers markets statewide to expand the Double Up Food Bucks program from a Detroit-based pilot to the statewide program it is today.

Now in her role with Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Rachel oversees the activities of the ValleyHUB urban farm and food hub which works to get more local food on local plates in southwest Michigan. She would bring strong skills in organizational leadership, grant writing and administration, instructional design, and a broad network and knowledge in food and farming systems in Michigan to MIFMA if reelected.