Michigan Food Hub Learning and Innovation Network

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 source-identified food products (USDA-AMS working definition). Food hubs can be operated as a for-profit business, a non-profit organization, as well as other organizational forms.

What are the goals of the Michigan Food Hub Learning and Innovation Network?
> Increased learning, innovation, and profitability for participating food hub and other regional food businesses
> Increased access to food hub financial and technical assistance, research, and education
> Increased business to business collaboration and trust across food hubs and other regional food businesses
> Measurably increase healthy food access to low-income communities and vulnerable children in order to increase healthy outcomes
> Increased collaboration among food and health agencies and organizations in Michigan to support food hubs

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 funding from MDARD in 2012/2014 for multiple food hub projects, and funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for network convening done in collaboration with Morse Marketing Connections.

What is the Michigan Food Hub Learning and Innovation Network doing?
> 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
> Maintaining a statewide listserv and an information page on the CRFS website
> Coordinating a network of local food hub facilitators
> Responding to emerging food hub needs through regional and local food hub meetings, conferences, learning sessions, webinars, trainings, and context-specific tool development
> 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
> Coordinating technical assistance resources related to the MI Good Food Fund
> Developed a case study guide for developing a statewide food hub learning and innovation network (published by Center for Regional Food Systems, 2014)
> Developing a best practices guide for developing successful Michigan-based food hubs and other regional food businesses (2015)
**What are the roles of local food hub facilitators and where are they serving?**

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

There are currently six part-time facilitators serving throughout Michigan. The local food hub facilitators’ contact information, biographies, and a map of their regions are available at: www.foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/michigan_food_hub_network_facilitator_bios

**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. 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  
  email: rspirog@msu.edu  
  phone: 517-353-0694

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

- **Noel Bielaczyc**, Food Systems Specialist  
  MSU Center for Regional Food Systems  
  email: bielacz1@msu.edu  
  phone: 517-432-0093

**Michigan Food Hub Learning and Innovation Network Webpage:**

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

**Statewide Contact List:**  
www.foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/mi-fh-contacts

**Resources on Food Hubs:**  
www.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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