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# Lake County Farmers Market Feasibility Study

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## Presentation Overview

- Purposes of the Study
- Definition of a Farmers Market
- Goal of the Lake County Farmers Market
- Key Assets in Lake County
- Models Examined:
  - Traditional Market
  - Mobile Market
  - Foraged Crops
- Possible Locations
- Lead Organization & Budget
- Recommendations



Circle R Farm hosts a table at the District Health Department #10 Project Fresh Market.

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## Purposes of the Study

- To provide guidance to the Lake County Community Food Council.
- To gather citizen input.
- To help increase access to locally grown, healthy foods in Lake County.
- To examine the feasibility of a farmers market on Lake County’s property in Webber Township (a.k.a. the former fairgrounds).


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## Definition of a Farmers Market

The Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) defines farmers markets as...

**“a public and recurring assembly of farmers or their representatives selling direct-to-consumer food and products which they have produced themselves.”**

It is also noted that farmers markets are organized for the purpose of facilitating personal connection that create mutual benefits for local farmers, vendors, shoppers and communities (MIFMA, 2016).



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## Goal of a Lake County Farmers Market

### #1 Health

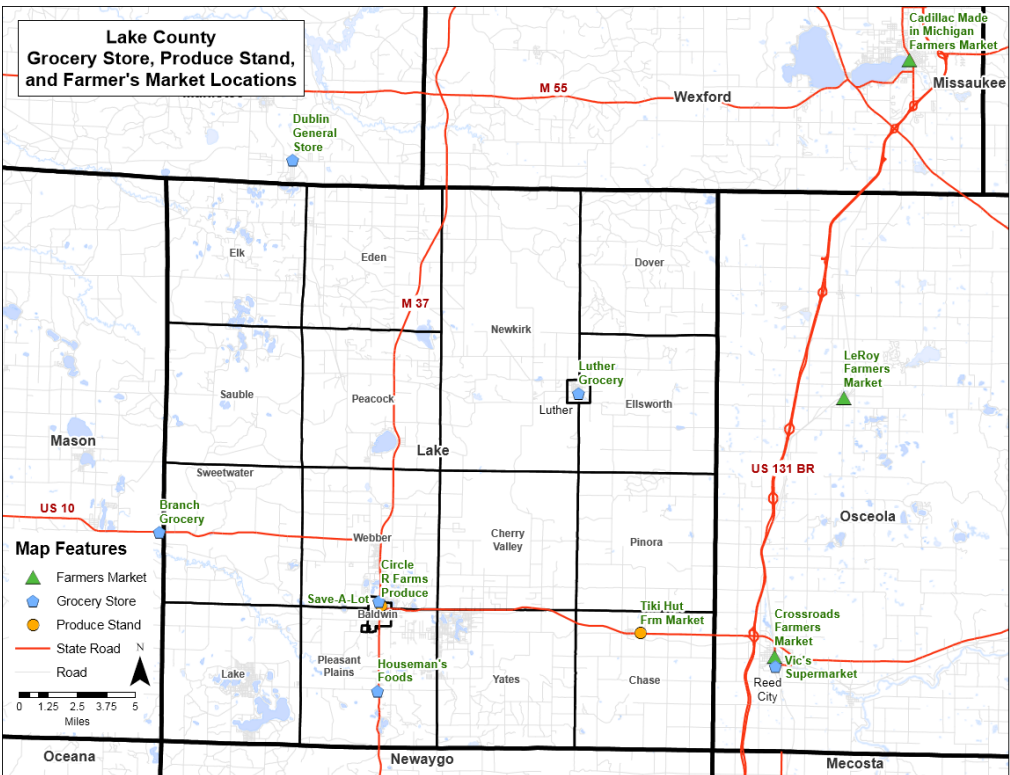
\*44% of Lake County’s children live in poverty. Research has shown limited resource families are often unhealthy and overweight. Lack of employment (11% unemployment in Lake Co.) and access to a healthy diet are contributing factors.

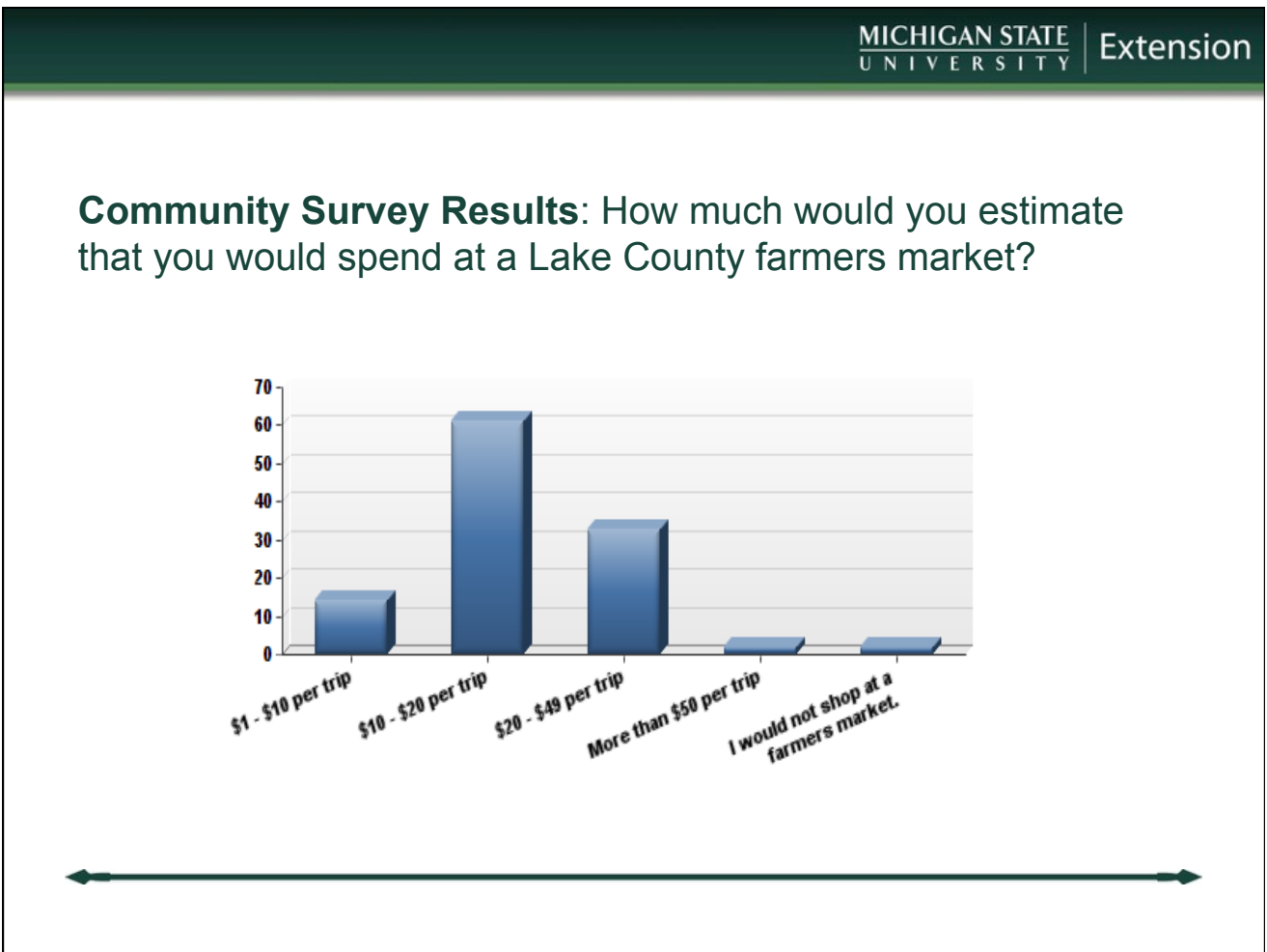
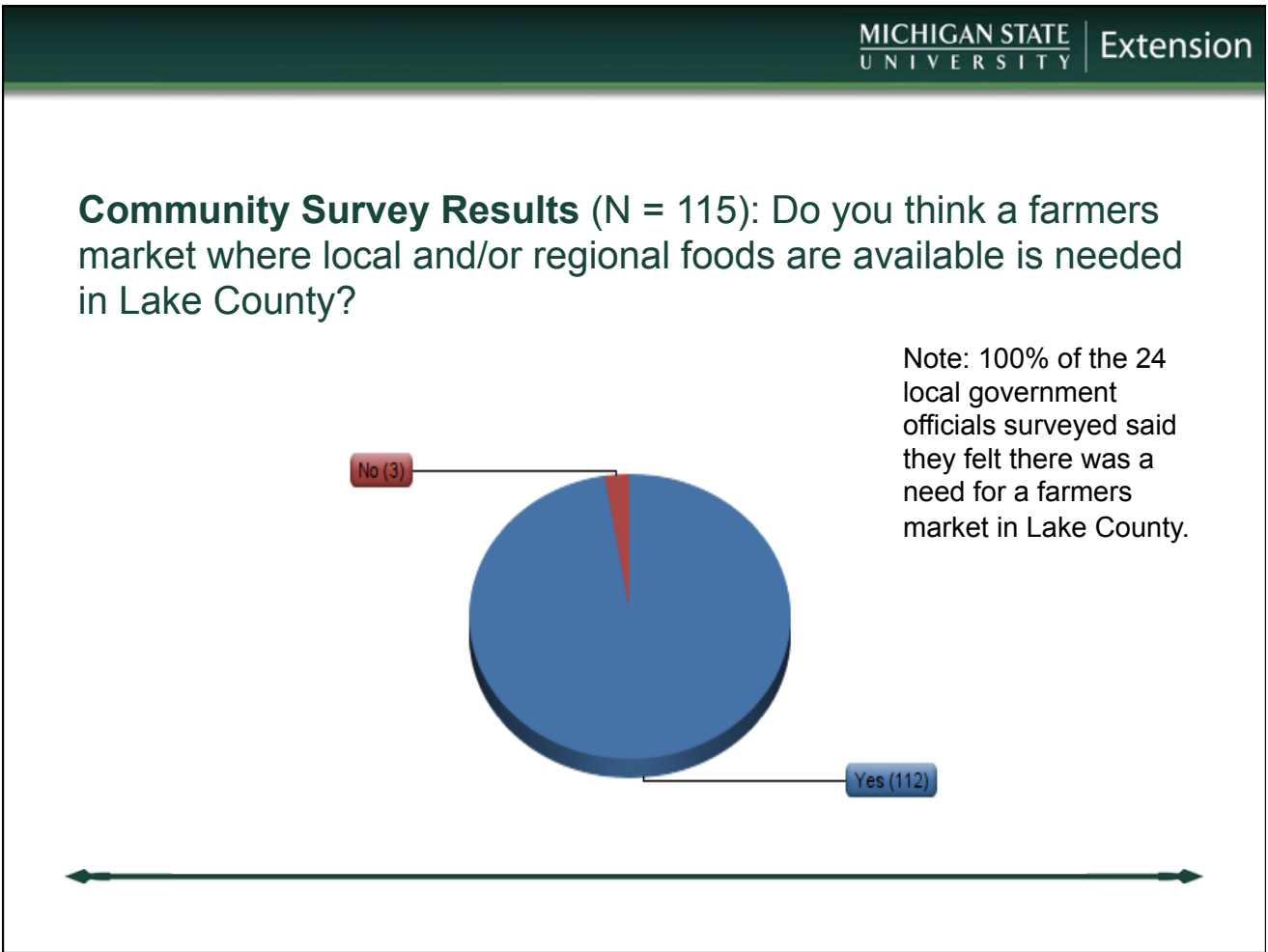
Lake County has an adult obesity rate of 33%.\*

\*Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings, 2016\*

## Key Assets in Lake County

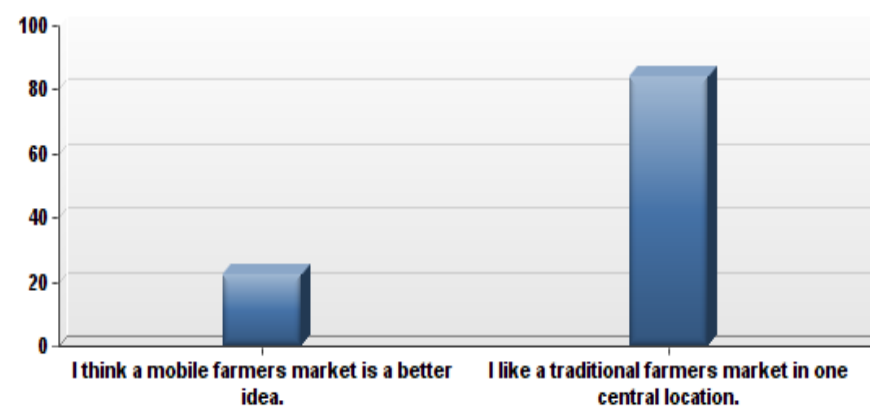
- Lake County Community Food Council and Pantry Network
- Local Farmstands and DHD #10 Project Fresh Markets
  - Circle R Farm
  - Tiki Hut
  - Larry Lewis, Expert in Farmers Market Management
- Acceptance of SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks (in the future)
- Grocery Stores + DHD #10 CDC Grant Project
  - Houseman Foods
  - Save-a-Lot
  - M-37 Meat Shack
  - Corner Stores







## Models Examined: Traditional Market



## Community Survey Results N = 115

## What is a Mobile Market?

- A vehicle that can move from area to area to distribute food.
- Needs a refrigeration system
- Serves the needs of those who cannot afford transportation to a typical farmers market



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### Mobile Market (Cont.)

- \$50,000\* start-up costs
- \$75,000\* ongoing labor and fuel costs per year
- Logistics of purchasing, storing and transporting food
- Internet connection needed for SNAP and credit card transactions
- Requires grant funding and management

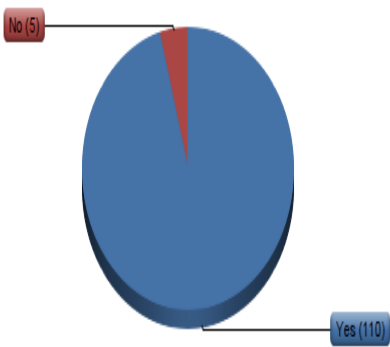
\*Note these figures are for the YMCA Veggie Van and numbers may be different depending on different cases\*



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### Foraged Products

- Lake County doesn't have many farms producing fruits and vegetables, but it does have lots of foraged products: mushrooms, ramps, leeks, fiddlehead ferns, honey, maple syrup, herbs, etc.



Community Survey Results supported the idea of a “wild market” featuring foraged products.

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## Foraged Products (Continued)

Unfortunately, the U.S. Forest Service **PROHIBITS** foraging products for commercial sales on any National Forest Lands.

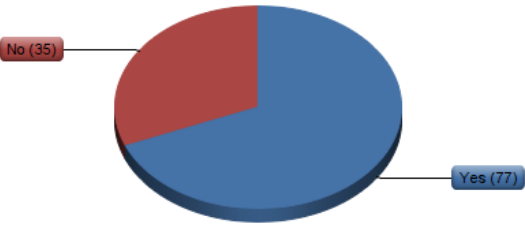
With this strict policy, MSUE believes it would be unwise to create a farmers market with a theme that might encourage citizens to break the law.

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## Locations for a Traditional Market

**Community Survey Results:** Webber Township property owned by Lake County. Is this an appropriate location for a farmers market in Lake County?

Key Issue: Webber Township zoning prohibits farmers markets. This location may not be supported by the Township.



Response	Count
Yes	77
No	35

The most popular option other than Webber Township was a market in **Baldwin**. Many people felt this is the location with the most traffic/people.



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## Assessment of Other Regional Markets (pt. 1)

Ludington

- May 27<sup>th</sup> through Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>
- Located in Downtown Ludington
- Weekly
- Unknown number of vendors



Reed City


- May 23<sup>rd</sup> through Oct.
- Located at 115 Chestnut St. Reed City
- Weekly
- 7 Vendors

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## Assessment of Other Regional Markets (pt. 2)

Newaygo County

- June 26<sup>th</sup> through Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>
- Located at 28 State St. Newaygo
- Weekly
- 15 vendors



Big Rapids

- May through Oct.
- Located at 226 North Michigan Avenue in Big Rapids
- Twice a week
- 10 vendors


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### Key Issues: Lead Organization

- Lake County is unable/unwilling.
- MSU Extension is unable.

Further Research:

- Pleasant Plains Township may be willing
- Lions Club
- Support from the Mason-Lake Conservation District
- Support from the new Economic Development organization



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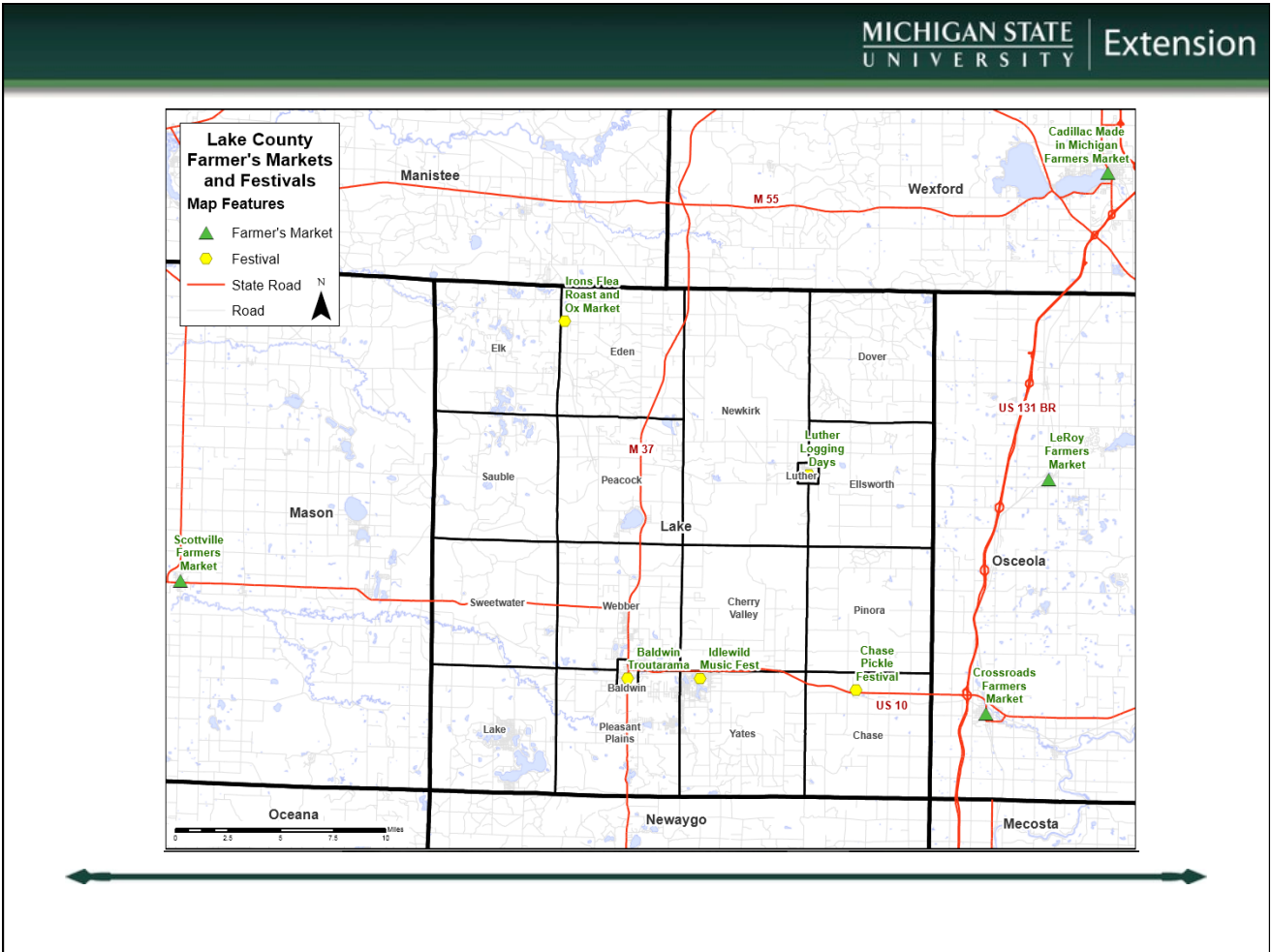
### Key Issues: Sample FM Expense List from MIFMA

Expenses	2017	2018	2019
Advertising and marketing	\$1,500	\$1,000	\$1,000
Fees associated with food assistance programs: SNAP, DUFB	\$1,000	\$650	\$650
Insurance	\$500	\$500	\$500
Market Manager salary (530 hours/yr,\$15/hr, 25% fringe, 3-5% annual raise)	\$9,940	\$10,435	\$10,960
Supplies: canopy, table, chairs, trash cans, picnic tables, first aid, banner, cones, etc.)	\$1,500	\$500	\$500
Telephone for market/manager (\$50 per month)	\$600	\$600	\$600
TOTAL:	\$15,040	\$13,685	\$14,210

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### Recommendation: Pursue a Phase In Process to Achieve a Weekly Traditional Farmers Market

Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Support local farmers and grocery stores sourcing local products through increased marketing and grant project support.	Hire a grant writer to begin securing support for a farmers market	Hire a farmers market manager. Have them attend the MIFMA Farmers Market Manager Certificate Program.
Find a lead organization to coordinate a Lake County Farmers Market. This organization selects the location.	Develop a database of possible vendors and form a vendor committee.	Develop vendor policies and sign-up process.
Consider adding farmers markets to local festivals: Ox Roast, Troutarama, Pickle Fest in Chase, and Logging Days in Luther	Develop a marketing plan.	




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## Possible Grants (pt. 1)

- Hoophouse loans (Hoophouses for health MIFMA) \*\$1,000-\$15,000\*
- USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) AMS (Agricultural Marketing Service) Farmers Market Promotion Program Grants \*\$50,000-\$500,000 depending on the loan type.\*
- USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) AMS (Agricultural Marketing Service) Local Food Promotion Program Grants \*\$25,000-\$500,000 depending on the loan type.\*



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## Possible Grants (pt. 2)

SARE Grants (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education)

- The Farmer/Rancher \*\$7,500-\$22,500\*
- Research and Education \*\$10,000-\$200,000
- Professional Development Programs \*\$30,000-\$75,000\*
- Graduate Student Program \*up to \$12,000\*
- Partnership Programs \*up to \$30,000\*
- Youth Education Program \*up to \$2,000\*



**Thank you!**

**Questions and/or discussion?**

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Build-a-Box Garden activity at Webber Township in June 2016 sponsored by the Lake County Community Food Council.