



*Sowing
growth*

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Eastern Ingham Farmers Market

EASTERN INGHAM FARMERS MARKET IS REFERRED TO AS
EIFM OR MARKET THROUGHOUT THIS REPORT

**2023 SOWING GROWTH
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Carrie Pahl (partial year)

WHO WE ARE

Sowing Growth is a 501(c)(3) organization that operates the Eastern Ingham Farmers Market (EIFM) as part of its commitment to meet the community's needs for healthy fresh food and "food for the soul".

From Sowing Growth Board

The Board of Directors of Sowing Growth is pleased to issue its 2023 Annual Report which briefly recaps our busy, productive, and record-breaking sixth year of operating the Eastern Ingham Farmers Market. The Board proudly reports to you that most of our strategic goals for 2023 were met or exceeded. For this achievement, we thank the City of Williamston, scores of individuals donating their time, business sponsors, donors, visitors, and vendors. All were key to our success.

This past year, we celebrated Tom Cary's fifth year as Market Manager, and upon his decision to move on, the Board has selected Krysta James as our successor Market Manager. We are already hard at work preparing for the 2024 Market season.

Please take a moment to peruse our 2023 Annual Report and share pride in our accomplishments. If you are not already part of the Sowing Growth family, consider becoming a volunteer, vendor, supporter, or sponsor as we begin our seventh year of operating the Market that serves the greater Williamston area.

Thank you so much for your part in our accomplishments!

Jane, Sharon, Ryan, Michelle, Symantha, Scott, Jackie, and Carol

THE MARKET

The Eastern Ingham Farmers Market is a Sowing Growth program that:

- Provides access to fresh, local, healthy, and seasonal food to a broader community.
- Provides access to artisans' handcrafted products, creations, and works of art.
- Creates a fun, safe, and healthy market community environment that supports and promotes educational opportunities about local food, local farms, sustainable, healthy growing practices, and artisan skills, techniques, and creative processes.



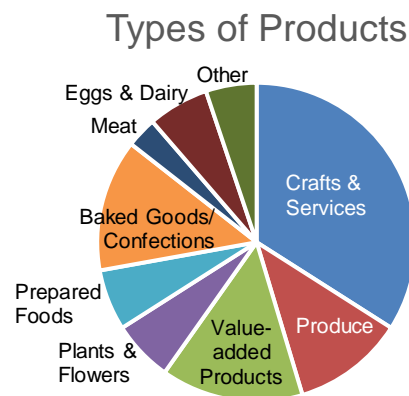
The Market is held adjacent to
McCORMICK PARK, WILLIAMSTON, MICHIGAN
Sundays 10:00 am to 2:00 pm MID-MAY TO MID-OCTOBER
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 534, Williamston, MI 48895
www.EasternInghamFarmersMarket.org
Market e-mail: EasternInghamFM@gmail.com
Find us on [Facebook](#)
Market Manager's Phone: 517-618-1630

WHAT'S IN THE MARKET

Vendors at the Market

In 2023, we welcomed 41 new and 41 returning vendors for a total of 82 farmers, producers of food items, artisans, and community organizations. They sold fruits, vegetables, meat, cheese, honey, maple syrup, flowers, bread, baked goods, sauces, preserves, knife and tool sharpening, and much more. Food trucks and vendors bringing ready-to-eat treats and meals, along with coffee were available at nearly every Market this season. We continued to grow the number of vendors, averaging 26 vendors per week for the season, our highest average yet.

- Crafts and Services
- Produce
- Value-added Products
- Plants and Flowers
- Prepared Foods
- Baked Good/Confections
- Meat
- Eggs
- Other



Sowing Growth continues to support activities within the Market:

- Musicians (entertainment just for fun)
- Art with Scott (local artisan provides firsthand art experiences)
- Market Customer Loyalty Club Card
- Bottle and Can Fundraiser at every Market and twice monthly in the off season (Can Van)
- Power of Produce (POP Club) 4 weeks in August for children ages 3-8
- Seedlings and Sprouts (craft activities for all children)
- Nature Discovery provides monthly exhibits of Michigan-native reptiles and amphibians.
- Senior Power of Produce (POP Plus) nutrition awareness program for adults aged 60 and above.
- Pollination Station (area organizations share information on public interest topics)



2023 FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Sowing Growth and many of our vendors participate in these state and federal food assistance programs. Altogether, Sowing Growth, state, and federal food assistance programs totaled \$1,913 in 2023.

- The Sowing Growth's Power of Produce Club (POP) issued \$128 in Market produce tokens and its companion POP Plus (Senior Program) issued \$800 in Market produce coupons.
- Total customer use of state and federal food assistance programs was at \$1,263, down 5.5% from 2022. This reflects:
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - \$671(\$806 in 2022).
 - WIC Project Fresh - \$110 (\$155 in 2022).
 - Double Up Food Bucks (DUFb) - \$452 (\$836 in 2022); and
 - Senior Project Fresh - \$30 (\$170 in 2022).



2023 ECONOMIC IMPACT – NEARLY \$160,000

Based on 58% of vendors reporting sales data, EIFM vendor sales reached an estimated \$105,595 (includes Holiday Market), up 3.8% over 2022. Research by other farmers markets across the country indicates that market customers typically spend additional money in the community on market days, known as the 1.5x community economic multiplier. In the case of the EIFM, this equates to an approximate total economic impact to the Williamston area of \$158,392.50.



Power of Produce-POP Clubs

The Power of Produce-POP Club enrolled 64 children ages 3-8 in 2023. Thanks to a grant from the WW Grainger Corporation, the children received \$2 each week of attendance in the four weeks the program operated to spend on fresh produce at the Market.

Following up on the success with children, an effort was made this year to bring more senior citizens to the Market. Sowing Growth was the beneficiary of a grant from McLaren Health Systems to create and implement a Senior Power of Produce (POP Plus) Club, targeting seniors who visited the Market who were at least 60 years of age. Eighty individuals joined the POP Plus Club. Four sessions were held at the Market in September and members were issued \$10 coupon books to spend on fresh produce at the Market. Participants received a sampling of something made from Market produce, a canvas tote bag, recipe card, food scrub brush, and nutrition information.



Successes

2023 Achievements

- Created specific programs to draw in more foot traffic working towards the 2026 goals for the regular Market season.
- Met the following 2023 objectives:
 - Initiated a Senior Power of Produce (POP Plus) program for seniors.
 - Provided more prepared foods and added a coffee vendor.
 - Upped our social media presence from 2022 by increasing Facebook followers from 3,700 to 4,100; newsletter subscribers from 661 to 760; and Instagram followers from 296 to 347.
 - Market information displayed on the Community digital message board all year long.
 - Collaborated with the Williamston Area Senior Center to initiate a gleaner's project to collect and distribute unsold produce and commercially prepared food from the Market vendors totaling over 700 lbs. of food (July to October).
 - Increased vendors to 82 (some attended weekly, while others less frequently)
 - Increased the number of visitors in the 2023 Market season from 11,700 to 12,146.
 - Created a new means of financial support for weekly Market themes via the Sunday Market Supporter.
 - This year individuals, families, and businesses donated \$100 for one or more Sunday Markets, successfully covering theme costs for 10 of 23 Markets.
 - Increased grant activity to fund the POP programs.
 - Received \$250 for horticulture books from the Williamston Red Cedar Garden Club used for the POP Club.
 - Received a \$2,200 grant from McLaren Health Plan to support the POP Plus.
 - Received \$2500 in cash for the POP Club program from WW Grainger.
 - Received \$2000+ worth of equipment from WW Grainger for POP Club for food demos.
- Partially Achieved: Production of two short videos.
- Partially Achieved: Bottle and can collection at 87% of goal.

2024 Goals

- Collaborate with the Williamston Area Senior Center to glean and distribute 1000 lbs. of unsold food and produce donated by vendors after each Market.
- Explore the viability of offering off-season Markets at an indoor venue.
- Increase the number of visitors to the Market who participate in the state and federal food assistance programs.
- Determine why individuals do not come to the Market regularly and develop strategies to promote participation.

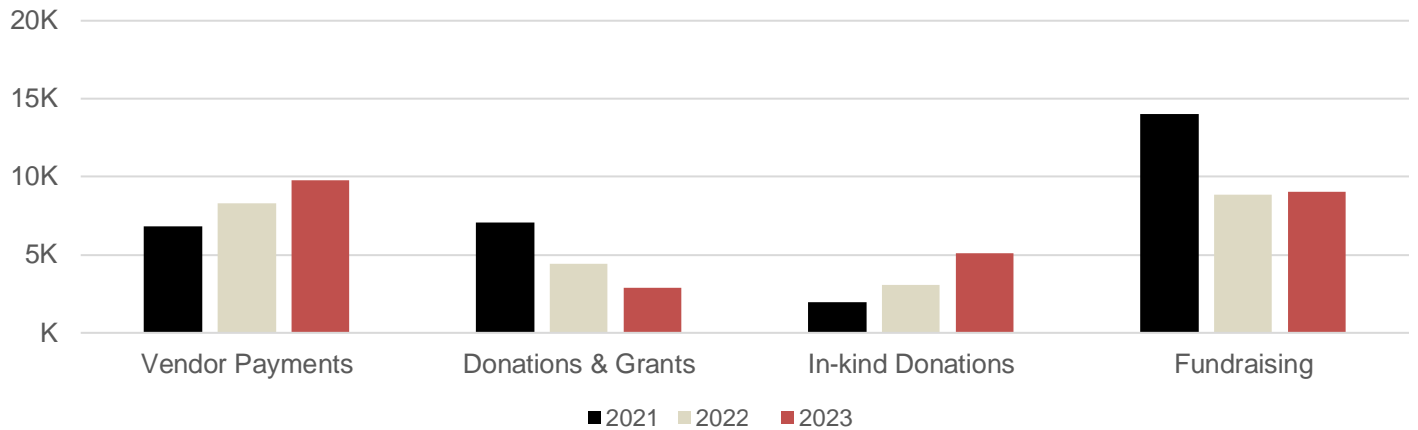


FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

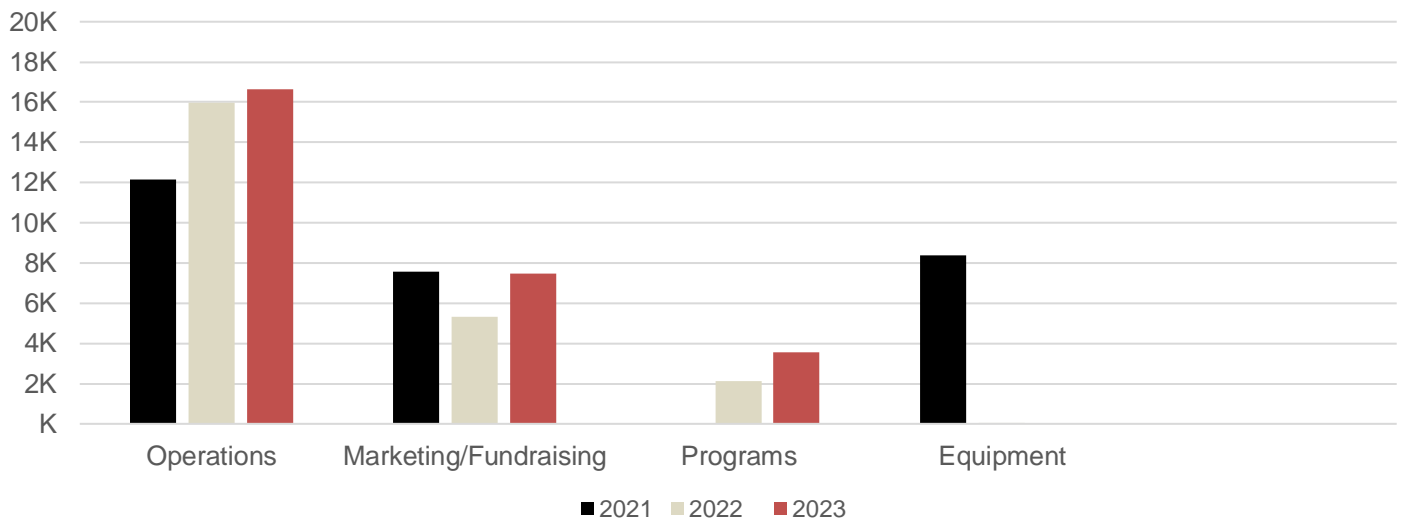
Income	2021	2022	2023
Vendor Payments	6,815.00	8,275.00	9,771.20
Donations & Grants	7,047.20	4,446.50	2,914.00
In-kind donations	1,943.84	3,060.78	5,110.29
Fundraising	14,048.53	8,825.65	9,027.05

Note that Fundraising in 2021 was higher during the Covid19 Pandemic with personal contributions.

Year over year income



Year over year costs



Expenses	2021	2022	2023
Operations	12,138.04	15,962.60	16,622.39
Marketing/Fundraising	7,546.99	5,306.40	7,489.57
Programs	0	2,139.79	3,571.64
Equipment	8,385.87	10.99	0

Note that Program expenses in 2021 were lower because there were no programs during the Covid19 Pandemic and the Equipment expenses in 2023 were less because much of the equipment was previously purchased.

