

FoodCorps Michigan Service Site Descriptions

Below you will find detailed descriptions of Michigan-based service sites, located in four regions within the lower peninsula:

- Central Michigan
 - Crim Fitness Foundation - Flint

- Northern Michigan
 - Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities – Petoskey
 - Michigan State University Extension - Grand Traverse County - Traverse City*
 - Michigan State University Extension - Otsego County - Hillman

- Southeastern Michigan
 - Detroit Public Schools Office of School Nutrition: Farm and Gardens Program – Detroit

- West Michigan
 - Muskegon Public Schools - Muskegon

*This site will transition out of the FoodCorps Program at the end of the PY21 academic year.

Each description includes details about the community where the service site is situated, the overall work and mission of the organization, and what an incoming service member can expect to do on a day-to-day basis at the site. We hope this document will help you to best determine where you are most interested in serving.

Central Michigan Crim Fitness Foundation Flint

Community Description

The City of Flint, MI is home to approximately 99,763 people and known as the birthplace of General Motors in 1908. Flint has grown significantly over the past few years by adding restaurants and college housing. Kettering University and the University of Michigan-Flint are both based in the city, which boasts a variety of apartments and lofts. Rental prices average between \$400-\$800.

Partner Organization Description

The Crim Fitness Foundation is committed to serving a leadership role in advancing the national agenda for improving health in our nation's communities. What does this mean? It means that the Crim believes we can be a catalyst for authentic change. Our response to the epidemic of childhood obesity is to provide physical activity and nutrition education to over 10,000 youth in the City of Flint, Genesee County, and beyond each and every day. Be part of our better future - help us fight childhood obesity, improve our community's health, and increase access to physical activity. Help us encourage an attitude of positive change and hope for the future. Together we can change health, change lives, change communities!

Service Activities Description

Our service members currently serve in 8 schools: Brownell K-2 STEM Academy, Doyle-Ryder Elementary, Durant-Tuuri-Mott Elementary, Eisenhower Elementary, Freeman Elementary, Neithercut Elementary, Pierce Elementary, and Potter Elementary. Our service members teach garden and cooking lessons to a variety of grade levels ranging from Kindergarten to 8th grade. They help to create a healthy environment by encouraging the establishment of gardens, whether indoors or outdoors. They provide opportunities to have students try new foods by conducting taste tests during lunch times. Our service members also reach out to the community as a whole to extend the healthy environment past school walls. They will do this through education, as well as parent and volunteer recruitment. In addition, they may attend meetings of other organizations to encourage collaboration throughout the city in an effort to create a better food system.

Skills, Interest, Knowledge Preferences

Service members should have experience working with youth and some gardening knowledge. In addition, candidates should have a desire to engage with the community.

Helpful Languages: Spanish

Northern Michigan Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities Petoskey

Community Description

Rural northwest lower Michigan, where our service member will live, is a diverse agricultural area featuring immense natural beauty. Groundwork Center maintains offices in Traverse City and Petoskey. Though the central office is located in Traverse City, the service member may choose to live in a community closer to the schools they serve, which would mean working out of our Petoskey office. With a year-round population of just under 6,000, Petoskey is home to restaurants interested in promoting locally grown foods; several breweries and wineries utilizing locally grown products, and a strong tourism economy. Northwest lower Michigan's topography is noted for its forests, clean rivers, and magnificent Lake Michigan shoreline. Opportunities for biking, hiking, boating, and beaches are abundant. This rural region shares a diverse agricultural heritage, a legacy of seasonal, low-paying jobs, and a large population of "working poor" families. The percentage of students receiving free and reduced price school lunches ranges from 50 to 96 percent, and the number of students per school district ranges from 153 to 2,021 to 10,000. These districts - along with the students and their parents - have embraced farm to school as a way to provide healthy food to kids while investing in the local economy. The Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities will do what it can to support our service member in their search for housing.

Partner Organization Description

The Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities (formerly known as the Michigan Land Use Institute) works to protect the environment, strengthen the economy, and build community. We raise awareness and support for cleaner energy, more local food, and expanded transportation choices. Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities' Food & Farming program is a 10-county effort in northwest Lower Michigan that we launched in 2002 to grow jobs, save farmland, and build healthier communities through a strong local food economy. It is comprised of three primary components: 1) Taste the Local Difference marketing includes an annual print and online guide to 260 farms; biographical marketing; and a stepped-up marketing campaign with area grocers to help them sell more locally grown food. 2) Healthy Food for All promotes local food in schools, food pantries and in health care and human service programs. 3) Northwest Michigan Food & Farming Network is a network of business, health, farm, government, school, economic development, community garden, and land preservation partners. Initiated and convened by the Groundwork Center, the goal of the network is that the region's retail, school, and household sectors will source 20 percent locally grown food by 2020. Our service member will work out of Petoskey, Michigan with the Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, whose farm to school program helps schools serve locally grown foods by connecting them to farms and related resources. Our service member will also meet and collaborate with many other community organizations with which the Groundwork Center collaborates, including Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District (TBAISD), the local

Michigan State University Extension, Grand Traverse Foodshed Alliance, and nonprofit organizations including SEEDS, Grow Benzie, and Crosshatch, which also have programs that serve farmers and gardeners. Our service member will travel to schools in up to two rural school systems in two counties that share a diverse agricultural region.

Service Activities Description

Boyne Falls Public Schools is a small K-12 school located in a rural community approximately 30 minutes south of Petoskey. We added Boyne Falls as a new FoodCorps school in FY2017, having previously worked with them indirectly through grants aimed at improving school cafeteria infrastructure and promoting a healthy school food environment. Chef Nate, the food service director at Boyne Falls, is an enthusiastic supporter of farm to school initiatives. The school has a small hoop house just behind the cafeteria, which grows produce that is featured on the school lunch line. Roughly 65% of the student population qualifies for free or reduced lunch, and school administrators including the superintendent, principal, nurse and teachers have expressed creating a healthy school food environment as a primary goal. Pellston Public Schools is a small K-12 school located in a rural community approximately 20 minutes south of Mackinaw City. We added Pellston as a FoodCorps school in FY2018, having previously worked with them indirectly through our community partners in the region. Our service member serves closely with the Food Service Director to help show the value of introducing students to new, healthy recipes in the classroom as well as through monthly cafeteria taste tests. The school has many supportive teachers and administrators. The school, in 2019-2020, qualified for Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which is a non-pricing meal service option for schools and school districts in low-income areas. CEP allows the nation's highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications. Community advocates and school staff have started a school garden, and recently raised a hoop house on school grounds. East Jordan and Alanson Public Schools are both being added for the 2020-2021. Alanson's food service is run by Pellston's Food Service Director. East Jordan's food service program has been a beneficiary of some of Groundwork's other work, bolstering kitchens and cafeterias. Both schools are small and have high free/reduced lunch rates, as well as school gardens. At all four sites, the service members sit on school wellness committees, manage monthly cafeteria taste tests featuring seasonal produce, support local purchases as possible, provide support to teachers on food- and garden-based lessons; and help build a schoolwide culture of health.

Skills, Interest, Knowledge Preferences

Northwest Lower Michigan is full of immense natural beauty, so a love of the outdoors will definitely make you feel at home here! Our region is also characteristically rural, with many charming small towns brimming with great restaurants, breweries and wineries due to the large volume of tourists that flock to the region each summer. An appreciation for winter is also a must. Our spring frost date often falls after June 1st, so experience growing in hoop houses and utilizing season extension techniques will help you embrace growing up north.

Helpful Languages: Anishinaabemowin, Spanish

Michigan State University Extension - Grand Traverse County

Traverse City

Note: *This site will transition out of the FoodCorps Program at the end of the PY21 academic year.

Community Description

Beyond the summer tourism economy, and natural beauty of northwest Michigan, there is a legacy of seasonal, low-paying jobs and a large population of "working poor" families. Social determinants, or the structural determinants and conditions in which people are born, live, work and age are apparent upon review of secondary data sources. Several counties in the region exceed the state average for percentage of students eligible for free/reduced school meals.

Despite these challenges, our community has received national acknowledgment for our strong community food system. Programs like 10 Cents a Meal and local food distribution company, Cherry Capital Foods are just a few of the catalysts that have helped meet the call and demand for local food. The northwest Michigan community produces a diverse, bounty of nourishing food that can be found in one of many local restaurants, schools, worksite CSAs, or senior meal programs.

These districts have embraced farm to school as a way to provide healthy food to children and invest in the local economy. Traverse City has served as a FoodCorps service site since the launch of the program nationally during the 2011-2012 service term.

Partner Organization Description

Michigan State University Extension works to help improve people's lives by bringing MSU's vast knowledge and resources directly to individuals, families, communities, and farms. Food and Health is one of our four organizational program areas. FoodCorps complements our mission to promote individual and community health by aligning directly with objectives developed to meet our mission - specifically, working toward policy, systems, and environmental change and individual behavior change for chronic disease prevention.

Service Activities Description

The service member will serve Traverse Heights Elementary in Grand Traverse County and Suttons Bay Elementary in Leelanau County. Traverse Heights is situated in the city limits of Traverse City and is under the leadership of a principal who is enthusiastically committed to school wellness and is one our biggest supporters. Traverse Heights has a greenhouse on the school grounds and is staffed with school kitchen personnel who are supportive of our local Harvest of the Month taste tests. Suttons Bay Elementary is a new site added to the 2018-2019 program year.

At both sites, the service member coordinates and delivers monthly cafeteria taste tests featuring vegetables seasonal to Michigan; provides direct service work in partnership with teachers to conduct engaging classroom and garden-based education; and works with the school community/team to enhance the culture of health - including professional development for staff and participation in school-wide events. The service member shares the impacts of service to the school and broader community.

Skills, Interest, Knowledge Preferences

Interests/Knowledge: Food and nutrition, food systems, gardening, general cooking, institutional food procurement, and education.

Skills: Communication - written and verbal, application of food and nutrition/systems information into exciting and interesting learning opportunities, youth engagement, conflict management, and facilitation.

Helpful Languages: Spanish

Michigan State University Extension - Otsego County Hillman

Community Description

Northeastern Michigan Lower Michigan offers a truly varied cultural experience. The area is home to the acclaimed Jesse Besser Museum and Alpena Planetarium. Live theatre companies can be found in the neighboring cities of Alpena, Gaylord, Grayling, West Branch and Cheboygan.

The area is home to several exciting annual events. Mill River festival celebrates Hillman's rich heritage on the Thunder Bay River. Fisherman flock to several regional fishing festivals each year, including the Brown Trout Festival and Nautical Days Festival. The area also celebrates its extensive agricultural history through lively county fairs and harvest celebrations, such as the Posen Potato Festival.

Twenty lakes in twenty minutes is a phrase often heard when speaking of Northeastern Lower Michigan. Fishing, wildlife viewing, and watersports are all popular attractions at the area's innumerable lakes. The area is also referred to as the golf Mecca of the Midwest, with numerous courses ranging from mildly demanding to greens that can challenge even the most talented golfers.

Hillman is in rural Northeast Michigan and 20+ miles from food retail outlets. The population of the county is largely over 65. The school system shares a superintendent with Atlanta Community Schools 20 minutes away.

Hillman offers many community organizations such as the VFW Post 2356, Hillman Sportsman Club, Hillman Area Lions Club, Knights of Columbus, Hillman Area Chamber of Commerce, and Wheels of Northeast Michigan Classic and Antique Car Club. The Hillman Senior Citizen's Center and the Hillman Library are also available.

Partner Organization Description

Michigan State University Extension works to help improve people's lives by bringing MSU's vast knowledge and resources directly to individuals, families, communities, and farms. With a presence in every Michigan county, Extension faculty and staff members provide tools to live and work better. True to our land-grant mission and our position as a top global research university, Spartans work to advance the common good with an uncommon will.

Service Activities Description

The service member will serve at Hillman Elementary School; a rural school serving PK-5 grades. The service member is expected to participate in the following activities during the school year:

Hands on Learning—As a complement to classroom lessons, the school garden will allow the opportunity for the service member to bring seeds to harvest for the open house.

Healthy School Meals—The service member will coordinate monthly tastings and voting will inform food service of new items to include in the monthly menu.

School-wide Culture—The service member will enhance activities at Hillman Elementary School, such as an active recess and physical education curriculum from a Building Healthy Communities grant, as well as a 6-week 2nd-4th grade nutrition education series of MyPlate instruction. The service member will assist in coordinating healthy messaging and bulletin boards are delivered and prepared by the student leadership group.

Southeastern Michigan Detroit Public Schools Office of School Nutrition: Farm and Gardens Program Detroit

Community Description

Detroit is experiencing a rebirth fueled by innovation and a spirit of intentionality and sustainability. The city sits on an international border with Canada separated by a strait known as the Detroit River. Along the riverfront, one can find boating, biking, and volleyball among other recreational opportunities. One of the city's jewels, Belle Isle, is the nation's only free-standing island park. Belle Isle can be accessed by car or bike and offers running and hiking trails, a golf course, tennis and basketball courts, soccer fields, and fishing. The downtown and midtown communities of Detroit have been revived with the relocation of sports venues such as businesses Compuware, Shinola, Nike, Quicken Loans, and Whole Foods. Anchored by Wayne State University, Midtown Detroit is home to art and history museums, galleries, cafes, music venues, and theaters. A wide variety of locally owned ethnic restaurants can be found in neighborhoods across town. In addition, the city boasts one of the most diverse urban farming communities in the country of which including Detroit Public School Community District system is an active participant. Yes, Detroit has much to offer.

Partner Organization Description

In 2012, Detroit Public Schools Community District, along with community partners, kicked off an extensive farm to school initiative to create school gardens throughout the city. This program expands teacher access to real-life laboratories to engage students in lessons about healthy eating, nutrition, and concepts around growing food while increasing school access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Each site features raised beds constructed by students from the Drew Transition Center. This revolutionary project makes DPSCD one of the largest school districts in the nation in which food services, site management, and curriculum are working collaboratively to ensure students are able to learn academic content in a real-world context related to gardens. We currently have 80 active schools in our school garden program, a two-acre farm to school production farm, and programming that includes academic standards based field trips to the farm, family farm days, and school farm stands.

Service Activities Description

Service members are involved in hands-on nutrition-based lessons with students; and assist in the creation and sustaining of a healthier school/community environment. We are intentional about placing service members at schools that are active in our Detroit School Garden Collaborative and have a foundation of community engagement that are welcoming of service members. Dependent upon their skills and interests, service members will be placed at one of the following sites: Carstens Academy, Dixon Educational Learning Academy, Foreign Language Immersion and Cultural Studies School, Mackenzie Elementary-Middle School, and Ronald Brown Academy, and Spain Elementary-Middle School.

Skills, Interest, Knowledge Preferences

Strongly interested in service members with experience working with children, whether in a traditional classroom setting or informal settings (i.e. babysitting, camp counselor, etc.). Gardening, nutrition, and farming is certainly a plus, but not required as long as the service member has an interest in all three.

Detroit Public Schools Community District utilizes a structured environment. While we certainly value and encourage creativity and independence within our internal staff, it is important to note that service members are working within a large bureaucracy. It is a priority that applicants interested in this position can thrive in policy based working environments. Our district is made up of majority low-income students as well. Therefore experience in urban settings, specifically in social services or education based sites is preferred.

Helpful Languages: Spanish

West Michigan

Muskegon Public School District

Muskegon

Community Description

Our district serves both the urban core and the surrounding city areas including the shorelines of both Lake Michigan and Muskegon Lake. We have plentiful natural resources and boast terrific outdoor activities during all four seasons. We struggle economically as we have not fully transitioned away from our manufacturing base and economic challenges correlate along strong racial disparity lines. We have a history of lumbering and manufacturing that often exploited our natural resources and we are well on our way to changing our relationship with our small piece of the planet.

Partner Organization Description

We founded the first public school in Muskegon County in the mid-1850's; and currently serve the urban core of the city of Muskegon. Our district is home to more than 4,200 students most of whom qualify for free and reduced lunch. We have more than 350 district staff members and multiple partnerships with community-based organizations including non-profits, governmental and community health agencies.

Service Activities Description

Our service members engage with a team whose current efforts are focused at Muskegon Middle School and Lakeside Elementary. In addition, we partner with an urban farm that is across the street from our Moon Elementary School. The partnership between our food service company and our local growing community will be a focus area along with strengthening the connections between our food (e.g., farming and its consumable products) and our curriculum.

Skills, Interest, Knowledge Preferences

We prefer someone with strong communication skills, as we currently have a large community-based collaborative made up of diverse partners. Applicants should be self-directed and possess a willingness to learn, as well as the ability to network and work with different community partners.

Helpful Languages: Spanish