

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)
Final Performance Report**

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. As stated in the FMPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future FMPP or Local Food Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by FMPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to FMPP staff to avoid delays:

FMPP Phone: 202-690-4152; Email: USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-690-4152

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact FMPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30 2014 – March 31 st 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	Eric Kornacki
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Recipient Organization Name:	Re:Vision
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Westwood Local Food Buying Club and Fresh Food Delivery
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPPX-CO-0032
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Denver, CO
Total Awarded Budget:	\$99,726

FMPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

- Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).
 Different individual: Name: _____; Email: _____; Phone: _____

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- i. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

Goal/Objective 1: Improve access to healthy foods in low-income, food desert communities of Denver

- a. **Progress Made:** The initial program design, based off of surveys with over 600 households in our target area, showed demand for a fresh food home delivery service, supplemented with a small farmers market. However, after 12 months of implementation, not enough customers were participating in the home delivery service and buying club. Follow up surveys found that families did not feel comfortable with the online ordering system. Based off this data, Re:Vision ended the home delivery service, and switched to a farmers market and CSA model in December 2015.
- b. **NEW Objective:** Deliver a fresh food subscription program, called Real Food Basket, and offer a 3x week farmers market called Mercadito. The ramp up for both of these new programs took several months. The Real Food Box program was implemented by hiring local residents to conduct community outreach. The Real Food Box program delivered an average of 20 – 30 boxes per week between December 2015 through July 2016. Sales began to decline, however, during the summer months due to inconsistent participation and pick-up, and competition from other farm stands that were offering free produce donated by large distributors and grocery chains. The Mercadito farmers market launched in July 2016 and peaked in September/October. The Mercadito continued operations throughout the winter of 2016/17 and did not experience as significant a drop-off as expected.
- c. **Impact on Community:** Over 1200 market transactions, 300 estimated unique customers. Total market sales of \$16,552. 108 unique SNAP customers, totaling \$4,340 in SNAP sales and \$1,085 in Double-Up Food Bucks redeemed. 352 food boxes sold.

- ii. **Goal/Objective 2: Increase the affordability of fresh, locally produced foods for low-income consumers.**

- a. **Progress Made:** Affordability of fresh, locally produced foods has been a challenge as Re:Vision serves two of the poorest communities in Denver. Re:Vision has worked diligently to find producers, farmers, and distributors that can provide price points that the community can afford, but it was very difficult. Several farmers and producers were able to donate some product on a weekly basis, but in reality it was not enough. Re:Vision began accepting SNAP for its Real Food Box program and at the Mercadito farmers market in early 2016 as a way to provide benefit to more low-income families. In July 2016, Re:Vision received support from LiveWell Colorado to offer Double-Up Bucks for local produce (this was funded through a FINI grant). Additionally, Re:Vision promotoras received funding from Kaiser Permanente to conduct outreach and help families eligible, but not enrolled, to sign up for SNAP. These two additional resources have helped significantly in making fresh food affordable for

community residents. Without the DUFEB program and grant to conduct community outreach, the market would not have gained the traction it did. Overall, it is not apparent that fresh, local food can be sold at low-enough price points for low-income families without there being a subsidy, incentive or other financial program to help lower the cost.

b. Impact on Community: Hard to quantify the impact on the community due to affordability. We conducted numerous focus groups on product mix and affordability, and also have real data on what sells and what doesn't. Based on the number of customers visiting the Mercadito farmers market, we believe we are increasing access to affordable food.

iii. **Goal/Objective 3: Scale-up local food distribution efforts to test and create market demand to ultimately support a grocery store.**

a. **Progress Made:** Through the Real Food Box program and the Mercadito farmers market, Re:Vision has developed a strong supply chain with local farmers, producers and distributors. Re:Vision is talking with several local restaurants and corner stores that would like to purchase their produce from Re:Vision. These activities and relationships are valuable as Re:Vision helps build momentum towards opening a full-service grocery store called the Westwood Food Co-op, in 2018. The Mercadito has definitely helped create awareness about the plans for the Westwood Food Cooperative.

b. **Impact on Community:** Local food distribution have not had a measurable impact on the local community at this point.

iv. **Goal/Objective 4: Source produce and other agricultural products from more local farmers and producers.**

a. **Progress Made:** The success of sourcing local produce and agricultural products from local farmers and producers was hindered by the bankruptcy of a key distributor in the Denver-metro region called *Source Local*. *Source Local* was the biggest distributor of local produce and agriculture products, and helped support Re:Vision's efforts by offering large discounts to where we were purchasing at cost. However, they expanded too quickly and could not meet their debt obligations, leading to their bankruptcy. Their collapse left a substantial whole as they were the only local-only food distributor. Re:Vision worked with another local distributor, LoCo Foods, but their price points were too high. In turn, Re:Vision began building relationships directly with farmers and producers, but as to be expected, this is a very time-consuming activity. While piloting the buying club program, Re:Vision used an online platform called *Local Orbit* to facilitate the transaction between farmer/producer and consumer. But again due to a big technological divide in the community we serve, online ordering was not successful. In the end, Re:Vision developed relationships with about 18 key farmers and producers.

b. **Impact on Community:** Throughout all of our marketing efforts, Re:Vision made a conscientious effort to promote the benefits of local agriculture. This was centered on the economic multiplier of shopping locally, along with the benefits of having a strong regional food economy. The strongest messaging was when Re:Vision could tout the food grown and purchased from neighborhood farmers

and producers. Aside from the economic impact of sourcing products locally, it is hard to quantify other impact on the community that are separate from the benefits of increasing access and affordability to healthy food, mentioned in Goals 1 and 2.

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.

- i. Number of direct jobs created: 4
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 11
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 2
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 1
- v. Number of new markets established: 2
- vi. Market sales increased by \$16,552 and increased by 100%.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 18 farmers and producers
 - a. Percent Increase: 100%

Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?

Yes, through the Real Food Box Program, Re:Vision has begun reaching refugee and immigrant communities living in Sun Valley, the poorest zip code in the entire state of Colorado. This includes Somalian, Ethiopian, West African, and numerous South East Asian communities. In Westwood, the Real Food Box Program expanded to Westwood Homes, a Denver Housing Authority project, which has a large Vietnamese population, and four different public schools, which have about 90 – 95% students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. And the Mercadito reached an approximate 300 households in Westwood, 1/3 of which used SNAP to shop at the market.

3. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. **Who are your community partners?** Re:Vision's main partners for this program have been Denver Housing Authority, which runs workforce and subsidized housing in Sun Valley and Westwood, a community-based organization called Westwood Unidos, Denver Public Schools, LiveWell Colorado (funding Double-Up Bucks program), Kaiser Permanente and the Colorado Trust (paying for promotora outreach to sign up families for SNAP).
 - ii. **How have they contributed to the results you've already achieved?** Denver Housing Authority helped with outreach to its residents, and provided space and a facility for residents to pick up their weekly food basket. Other partners, including Denver Food Rescue and We Don't Waste, have helped with outreach, program design, and providing discounted or free produce to supplement the food basket program.
- 4. How will they contribute to future results?** Community partnerships are essential to the ongoing performance and sustainability of this program.
- 5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project?** We did not use contractors on this project.

6. **Have you publicized any results yet?*** No

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results?
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).

7. **Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?**

- i. **If so, how did you collect the information?** Yes, we did a large survey immediately prior to the grant with over 600 households. During the grant, we conducted additional survey and questionnaires with direct participants, focus groups with randomly selected community residents, and participatory community design charrettes.
- ii. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?** Feedback has predominantly highlighted the need for lower cost items, as well as the different ethnic and cultural foods that various community groups want. A focus group also brought to the surface feedback that the community in Westwood does not want a home delivery service due to technological and cultural barriers. We also held several participatory community meetings to help identify product selection and price points for the Mercadito farmers market.

8. **Budget Summary:**

- i. **As part of the FMPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:**
- ii. **Did the project generate any income?**
 - a. **If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?** Yes, \$16,552 of revenue was generated. This was reinvested back into the infrastructure of the market and to expand marketing and promotional activities. Some of the revenue also supported a market coordinator, who managed vendors and customer relations.

9. **Lessons Learned:**

- i. **Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).**

Throughout the grant period, we have encountered challenges and changes – many outside of our control - that have caused us to re-evaluate our programmatic activities associated with this grant. These challenges include the loss of ground leases on two of Re:Vision’s urban farms and the bankruptcy of a key local food supplier called Source Local. These unforeseen incidents impacted our supply chain, and our ability to source local produce at an affordable price. We responded by conducting outreach to as many local producers as we could, building our own relationships and supply chain. This requires a great deal more effort and time, but it paid off in other ways as a direct relationship with growers often resulted in them donating unsold produce.

Free home delivery service, which the community indicated, they were interested in, never got the traction we expected it to. This was largely in part due to technology barriers, where community members did not feel comfortable ordering their food through our online system. As a result, our program stalled for the first nine months, and it required us to have to figure out a brick-and-mortar solution to increasing food access. Fortunately, we were in the process of renovating an existing building and were able to shift towards a 'pop-up' marketplace 3x a week.

For our Food Box program, ordering and payment presented challenges for community members as well. At the very beginning, we tried to implement an online ordering system, where a family could select and purchase a box of produce several days prior to the pick-up date. But again, online ordering became a technological and cultural barrier. When it was clear that a different solution was needed, we moved toward satellite sights throughout the community. We chose Denver Housing Authority as a partner as they provided a highly dense grouping of our target population and offered free use of physical space. We then hired a local resident as an outreach site coordinator. They were responsible for conducting outreach weekly, taking orders, collecting payment, and then coordinating the delivery and distribution of the weekly food boxes. This program got off to a great start initially, but slowly started to drop off due to increasing competition from free food banks and churches, and from inconsistent outreach from the local resident site coordinators. We realized that we did not have the capacity to provide training and oversight to multiple site locations, and after six months, this program was discontinued.

In early-2016, our team went back to the drawing board and conducted several focus groups within the community. The main takeaways from these listening sessions was that cultural familiarity, consistency, and connection were all important aspects of what families needed in order to participate routinely. At this time, we decided to place all of our attention into creating the *Mercadito*, a pop-up market open 3 days a week. Through community feedback, we decided that the market needed to carry additional cultural food staples, such as tortillas, rice and beans, in addition to local produce and products. We engaged several key local farmers to provide consistent crops, such as hydroponic greens and tomatoes, and other high value items like melons, peaches, and cherries. We reached out to our network of neighborhood gardeners and offered them free space to sell extra produce from their gardens. And at each market, we made sure to have a local food producer selling fresh prepared food, like tacos or tamales. These small steps went a long way to making the market feel rooted within the community, and thereby, the community responded by participating consistently.

The last significant lesson learned was regarding food stamps (SNAP). From the beginning, we made sure that the market accepted SNAP. However, we were surprised to see that very few people in the beginning were paying with their food stamps. We conducted a few questionnaires, and also engaged several local government agencies and nonprofit organizations to determine the reason for the low usage. We discovered that our neighborhood had the highest eligible but lowest enrolled population in SNAP. This was largely in part due to misunderstanding, fear, or shame in signing up for food assistance. Through partnerships with other agencies, we received support to train our community promotoras in SNAP awareness so they could help educate community members and enroll eligible families in SNAP. And finally, we partnered with LiveWell Colorado, who provided incentives called "Double Up Food Bucks" to encourage families to use their SNAP dollars to purchase locally-grown produce at our market. These three aspects – outreach and education, enrollment, and incentivizing – were all necessary to overcome the barriers for families to use SNAP on local produce. We still have a long way to go to see significant usage, but we believe the trends are in the right direction.

- ii. **If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:**

We did not succeed in scaling up local food distribution as originally intended. This was largely in part to a lack of interest from the community for the home delivery service..

- iii. **Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:**

A word of caution about consumer interest studies. We conducted over 600 surveys with households in our target area prior to the grant, and this data indicated a strong desire for the home delivery and buying club model. In actuality, consumer behavior did not align with consumer preference indicated on the surveys. Additionally, consumers were more price sensitive to the increased cost for local produce than had been indicated on the survey.

Flexibility and adaptability are critical for the success of these types of food access and food promotion programs. Planning needs to be thorough and rigorous, however, the best laid plans can go awry. Adaptability and ability to pivot towards a different solution is valuable. This requires good evaluation systems and processes, which test assumptions, understand what data is valuable, and provide good data for management to assess. We had to test several models before finding one that worked.

10. Future Work:

- i. **How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project.**

Thanks in part to the FMPP grant, we have been able to establish a market that has good traction and adoption. We anticipate that the Mercadito will continue to operate as is for the foreseeable future as a joint partnership between Re:Vision and the Westwood Food Cooperative, which has been the goal all along. The market was a way to build momentum towards a full-service grocery store and farmers market in Westwood. We are in the middle of a property redevelopment, which will result in additional indoor and outdoor space for the Mercadito to expand into a daily store with a year-round weekend farmer and producer market. This will require additional financial support and fundraising. But the core operations of the market are supported by the nominal revenue and membership of the Westwood Food Cooperative. Currently, the market supports 3 part-time positions, and utilizes another 1 FTE volunteer equivalent.

- ii. **Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals?**

As part of its on-going efforts to develop local food systems in underserved communities, Re:Vision and the Westwood Food Cooperative (WFC), seek to implement *Barrio Local* - a truly local farmer's market featuring neighborhood producers for 7 months of the year, supplemented and supported by the year

round existing market, *Mercadito*, and a Food Box program operated by Re:Vision. The overall goal of these activities is to improve health and economic well-being of families living in underserved, food desert neighborhoods of Denver by improving access and affordability of local foods. **Barrio Local** will operate on Saturdays from June to October at the Westwood Food Coop, with Re:Vision providing logistical and administrative support to each neighborhood producer, helping to reduce the opportunity cost (time) resident producers are faced with and introducing the idea of a true farmers market to the community. Re:Vision will purchase whatever is not sold at the Saturday farmers market to source the existing *Mercadito* storefront and food box program throughout the week, supplementing with products from other Colorado farmers and ranchers. By expanding these healthy food services the project will increase accessibility of local food for over 60,000 residents living in food desert neighborhoods of Southwest Denver.