

## Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market 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 LFPP 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 LFPP staff to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: [USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov); Fax: 202-720-0300

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

<b>Report Date Range:</b> <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2014 – September 30, 2016
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	Kara Jones
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<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Building Capacity in the Regional Food Supply Chain
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-AZ-0007
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Tucson, Arizona
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$100,000

LFPP 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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1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by LFPP 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.

i. Goal/Objective 1: Facilitate the formation of a working cooperative of local food producers for the purpose of sharing technical assistance in business development and aggregating product to supply institutional buyers.

a. Progress Made: During the grant period, project staff facilitated three (3) technical assistance workshops for local farmers to further the development of a cooperative, and better prepare individual farmers and the farming cohort for accessing a wholesale market. Combined, the workshops represent 16 hours of technical assistance for each local grower: 13 hours of group training, and 3 hours of individualized agricultural business coaching. The content and outcome of these workshops are outlined below.

Workshop Title and Key Objective	Content-area Expert Facilitator	Outcome
<b>Strategic Crop Coordination:</b> Understand and discuss models of successful crop coordination and cooperation among local Producers for direct-to-consumer markets (i.e., Farmers’ Markets) as well as intermediated markets (i.e., institutional purchasers)	Patrick Staib, former Coordinator of La Agri-Cultura Network in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which worked with small farms to supply salad greens to public schools	14 farms participated, and all articulated the benefits of working in cooperation for at least some part of their business. There was consensus to have the Food Bank as the central administrator of the effort, and move forward with securing institutional buyers.
<b>Enterprise Budgeting:</b> Understand the financial planning process of enterprise budgeting based on the anticipated revenue of specific crops for various sales outlets, and production costs.	Anthony Flaccavento, organic farmer and food hub consultant; helped start successful food hub in Virginia	12 farms participated, and learned the importance of consistency and yield prediction when supplying large institutional buyers. Farms identified crops they could grow at large scale within labor and price constraints.
<b>On-Farm Budgeting and Crop Planning (one-on-one sessions):</b> Practice utilizing a Crop Enterprise Budgeting tool to determine crop selection, pricing, and production volumes for wholesale buyers as well as other markets. Determine financial and business benefits and risks of growing for a wholesale market.	Anthony Flaccavento, organic farmer and food hub consultant; helped start successful food hub in Virginia	4 farms participated, and learned how to use the crop budgeting tool to determine profit points for direct-to-consumer and wholesale markets. All also learned a feasible method for tracking yield data in the field to predict volume and increase reliable outputs.

Further technical assistance and business development was achieved through weekly interactions with farmers during produce drop-off, as well as meetings with farmers and institutional customers.

b. Impact on Community: The diversity of products provided to institutional buyers means that their respective constituents (i.e., patients, young students) were able to access new

varieties of healthy fruits and vegetables. One particular success was the new addition of locally grown chard to the community hospital menu. Product from six (6) different farms were aggregated to provide this healthy dark leafy green, which is the only dark leafy green on the hospital menu; overflow of product was sold to school pantries. Since December 2015, we have provided every-other-week deliveries of chard to the hospital, representing 6,000 servings of a dark leafy green vegetable to vulnerable populations. The success of this product has created more cohesion among the farmers in the cooperative, and laid some in-roads for future long-term leafy green product supply.

- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Facilitate relationship building and provide technical assistance for local institutional buyers to internally build capacity for local food procurement.
  - a. Progress Made: During the grant period, **project staff secured contracts with and supplied to three (3) institutional buyers**: Tucson Medical Center (TMC), and Tucson Unified School District (TUSD), and Sky Islands Charter High School. As a secondary market, the project supplied Caridad Community Kitchen. The project made first deliveries of naturally grown local produce to Tucson Medical Center on 7/13/15, to Tucson Unified School District on 9/4/15, and to Sky Islands Charter High School on 8/10/16. Throughout the course of the project, we also met with Banner Health Medical Center in October 2015, local distributor Merit Foods in January 2016, University of Arizona Student Union in August 2016, and three rural community hospitals in August 2016. Although grant funding has ended, the project is pursuing supply relationships with three institutions that have expressed initial interest (Benson Community Hospital, Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center, and Marana Unified School District), as well as with Arizona distribution company Stern Produce.
  - b. Impact on Community: With the continuation of institutional supply, local produce is reaching new markets and new populations. Hospital patients and staff, school students, and low-income culinary students have the opportunity to connect to the local food shed, different varieties of fruit and vegetables, and the seasonality of local produce. In the process of supply, project staff have learned a great deal about institutional processes for procurement and food preparation.
- iii. Goal/Objective 3: Increase the amount of locally grown produce distributed to low income, vulnerable families through institutional partnerships.
  - a. Progress Made: Large scale distribution of locally grown produce began in July 2015 and continued to (and past) the grant closing date. During this time, local institutions serving vulnerable populations purchased a total of **27,482 pounds** of fruits, vegetables, and herbs; this represents approximately **137,408 servings** of fresh fruits and vegetables. These institutions used their food service budgets to purchase local varieties of produce items they used in their operations: Tucson Medical Center bought slicing tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, broccoli, and chard were supplied to for use in their food service; Tucson Unified School District bought Asian pears, lettuce, cucumbers, apples, and herbs for a classroom sampling in low income elementary schools; and Caridad Community Kitchen purchased a wide range of assorted fruit, vegetables, and herbs to be prepared by low-income culinary students for preparation and distribution as part of 11,700 free meals to community members in need.

- b. Impact on Community: Prior to this project, very little fresh local produce was sourced by and supplied to community anchor institutions. During the course of this pilot, a community hospital and public schools purchased \$40,270.72 worth of fresh local produce to serve their vulnerable community member constituents. Social service agencies purchased \$28,433.05 worth of fresh local produce to provide as hot meals and in school pantries for food-insecure community members. This **\$68,703.77** is significant as a new source of income for local growers, which can enable them to continue producing food for community members.
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: 2
    - ii. Number of jobs retained: 16
    - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 2
    - iv. Number of markets expanded: 3
    - v. Number of new markets established: 3
    - vi. Market sales increased by \$68,703.77 and increased by 13% (of annual \$264K sales in the project site's forums for direct-to-consumer markets)
    - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 15 farms benefited from agricultural business technical assistance; 20 farms and 56 small producers benefited economically by supplying product at wholesale prices for distribution to institutional buyers
      - a. Percent Increase: Prior to this project 0 farms were receiving technical assistance around institutional supply, and 0 farms were supplying product to anchor institutions.
  
  3. 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?
 

We have reached new populations via produce supply, including TMC hospital patients, TMC hospital staff, TUSD public elementary school students, Sky Islands at-risk high school students, low-income culinary students, and clients at social service organizations receiving free meals.
  
  4. Discuss your community partnerships.
    - i. Who are your community partners?
 

Our primary community partners are 20 local farmers, 3 institutional buyers, and Local First Arizona.
    - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?
 

These partnerships have enabled the produce brokerage to transition from an idea to an actual reality. Their commitment over the past 24 months of this project has facilitated the formation of a farm-to-institution local supply chain, with local food sales each month since July 2015. They have also contributed to media coverage of the project to garner additional public support.
    - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant?

Beyond this grant, local produce supply to institutions is continuing. The farm and institutional partners will contribute by participating in quarterly pre-season planning meetings to coordinate large scale supply, and continuing contracts with CFB and individual farms as supply vendors.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?

We used contractors to provide expert technical assistance trainings and workshops to local producers. In Y1, two different contractors provided three workshops to local producers around the themes of crop coordination across farms, enterprise budgeting, and crop yield/profit prediction. In Y2, we used a different source of funding to contract with Regional Food Solutions Inc. for technical assistance to staff in building and sustaining a food value chain. These contractors brought a systems-development perspective to the project, based on their knowledge of other states' successful local food systems.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?\*

Yes, project process and results have been publicized in Arizona media forums.

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?

This project was publicized in the *Arizona Daily Star* newspaper, *Edible Baja Arizona* magazine, *Arizona Public Media*, and *Local First Arizona*. Below are the links to online content from these sources about this project:

- Farm-to-Institution in *Edible Baja Arizona* feature, 7-2015  
<http://ediblebajaarizona.com/farm-to-market>
- TUSD to Source from Local Farms in *AZ Daily Star* article, 8-2015  
[http://tucson.com/news/local/education/tusd-to-buy-produce-from-small-local-farmers/article\\_b438a667-e827-55f5-a9a6-93a8e72a5818.html](http://tucson.com/news/local/education/tusd-to-buy-produce-from-small-local-farmers/article_b438a667-e827-55f5-a9a6-93a8e72a5818.html)
- Farmers Benefit from TMC Partnership in *AZ Daily Star* article, 11-2015  
[http://tucson.com/business/local/local-farmers-benefit-from-food-bank-tmc-partnership/article\\_67f7a7db-b31b-5389-85c9-10100ed495d7.html](http://tucson.com/business/local/local-farmers-benefit-from-food-bank-tmc-partnership/article_67f7a7db-b31b-5389-85c9-10100ed495d7.html)
- Farm-to-Institution in *Local First Arizona* newsletter and blog, 7-2016  
<https://www.localfirstaz.com/news/2016/07/08/how-farm-to-institution-sourcing-puts-local-farmers-in-the-mix/>
- TUSD Food Mission in *Edible Baja Arizona* feature, 11-2016  
<http://ediblebajaarizona.com/feeding-tusd>
- Farm-to-Institution on *Arizona Public Media* radio series, 11-2016  
<https://radio.azpm.org/p/feeding-future/2016/11/17/99492-feeding-our-future-farmers-and-markets/>

- ii. To whom did you publicize the results?

Project goals and results were publicized in state-wide sources, but mostly distributed within the Pima County region of Southern Arizona.

- 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).

Combined, the media outlets used reach over 600,000 members of the public. Immediate project stakeholders—farmers and school/hospital employees—participated in the publicity efforts.

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?
  - i. If so, how did you collect the information?

Feedback was collected via formal participant evaluation of the technical assistance workshops, formal meetings about farmers' interests, informal conversations with farmers during produce aggregation, and discussions with institutional buyers.
  - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

Farmers found benefit in the additional source for income, as well as the potential for growing it. Institutional buyers are normally rather removed from where their food comes from, so they expressed excitement and a sense of meaning from working closely with farmers and contributing to the local economy.
  
8. Budget Summary:
  - i. As part of the LFPP 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? No.
    - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? N/A.
  
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).

Overview: The project designed and undertaken for this grant was completely new to us, and learning cycles were rapid. The project began with the intention of forming a traditional 'mini produce food hub' operated out of and by the Community Food Bank. However, it quickly became clear that many of the traditional food hub functions—such as securing diverse sales accounts, procuring diverse food products, storing items at specific temperatures and humidities for maximum shelf life, marketing, and maintaining a flexible delivery schedule—were not within the Food Bank's organizational mission, strengths, or existing capital infrastructure. Acknowledging this early on was key to seeking out food system development and farm-to-institution models that incorporated more types of organizations and businesses to better fill the diverse intermediary supply chain functions. Six months into assessment and implementation, the program manager was trained in the WealthWorks model for value chains. This partner-based approach to building multiple forms of wealth (i.e., health, economic, natural) became the guiding framework for the project. As a result, we were able to seek additional partner organizations' resources, and were more successful than if we had tried to build internal capacity to serve all intermediary supply chain roles by ourselves.

Strategic lessons learned include:

- Use a coalition-building approach (rather than a centralized or transactional one) to bring various necessary partners together in food system development work. In addition to establishing buy-in, this approach ensures that the solutions designed are actually desired by and beneficial for the key partners who make the food supply chain function.
- Secure product demand prior to product supply. It can be tempting to want to 'flood' a local product sales list with items in order to 'see what sticks,' but this strategy is likely to fall short and disengage farmers when not much works for institutional buyers. Be demand-driven by working with buyers to determine exactly what specific products they will buy.
- Communicate regularly and honestly to key partners to keep this diverse set of skills and interests engaged in food system development work.

Tactical lessons learned include:

- For all new activities undertaken (i.e., receiving a large delivery of a farmers' product for the first time), budget three times more time than anticipated, and involve at least two project staff—this allows for more accurate time allocation, and collaborative problem-solving on the fly.
- For product supply, nail down the exact product specifications (i.e., color, size, stems, leaves), packaging (i.e., bunched, loose, pack-size), and delivery schedule desired by the buyer, and communicate this in detail and writing every time the product is discussed. It is easy for one detail to be lost, which can lead to unacceptable product, no product, or product loss.
- Develop project, product, and farm marketing materials in advance of meetings and product sampling/pitches.
- It is most cost effective for farmers and supply intermediaries to arrange for the regular supply of a product (2-8 times per month) throughout its harvest season. This enables farmers to have a 'guaranteed' sale for the product's duration, rather than being on their own to find other sales outlets.
- When aggregating product, it is advisable to 'over-collect' from farmers by about 20% to provide a safe buffer for any individual farm's shortfall. Try to sell any overage product through a secondary sales outlet, like a Farmers' Market table or small restaurant.
- Seek knowledge and guidance from people and organizations who have done similar work before. With their on-the-ground experience, they are able to provide practical tactical advice for products and processes.
- Work with partners to determine the types and formats of technical assistance they are most interested in. Large formal sessions are often not the norm for farmers or purchasing departments.

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

Project goals related to institutional contracts and supply were met and even exceeded. The primary goal not achieved was the formation of a farmers' cooperative. At the beginning stages of this project, farmers did not know if there would be any traction for

farm-to-institution supply, so there was no purpose or incentive to put in all time and energy required to form a cooperative. The nature of this goal is such that it must be desired and pushed for by farmers who see it as in their self-interest. It was not realistic for the Community Food Bank to assume that it could facilitate this for farmers. Towards the end of this project, after \$40,000 in institutional sales, farmers themselves raised the possibility of forming a cooperative to increase agribusiness support. So, the goal of a farmers' cooperative is more relevant after some pilot implementation rather than upfront.

- 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.

Key project administration lessons fall in three categories:

- Implementation timeline – Some institutions have a once-a-year or lengthy process for distributors to become a vendor on record to sell them produce; others may even have to change certain internal policies to allow for local sourcing. It is advised to begin this process early with institutions to enable supply. Further, based on institutions' budgets and missions, local product supply is unlikely to be maximized within the first few years of implementation—anticipate needing to slowly build up each season with each institution.
- Evaluation – Keep real-time electronic records of needs assessments, meetings, product transactions, and participant feedback. This ensures both data collection and entry to assess project performance and communicate successes and gaps.
- Staffing – For food system development work, experienced staff with good judgement should serve in frontline roles to best cultivate important relationships and ensure quality in products and processes. At least two staff people should work on project activities to allow for knowledge redundancy and complementary skills to strengthen the work output. Volunteers cannot be relied on for the early stages of innovative work, or in cases where financial/legal liability is high.

#### 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.

In the course of implementing this project based out of Tucson (Southern Arizona's primary urban center) and piloting with relatively low volumes of produce, we realized that we were not able to engage many rural area farmers or rural area institutions. For this reason, we sought and received foundation funding to expand project activities more deliberately into the large rural Cochise County area. As a result, this project will continue on its same scale into 2018. We anticipate involving more farmers and buyers over the next year, and slowly increasing farm-to-institution sales.

- 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?

Future project goals revolve around strengthening the local food value chain partnerships, and moving into higher volume supply. Activities currently being planned to meet these goals include:

- Establish quarterly pre-season planning meetings with farmers and buyers to determine high volume products for seasonal supply.
- Build partnerships with local distribution companies to explore pathways scaling-up as well as long-term sustainability.
- Visit rural hospital and school districts with seasonal produce samples to cultivate them as institutional purchasers.
- Leverage relationship with Local First Arizona for an economic impact evaluation of this project work.
- Seek additional funding to support this value chain development work, as it will likely take at least 5 more years to become more institutionalized and resilient.