

**Farmers Market Promotion Program
Final Performance Report**

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. October 1-March 31, 20XX)</i>	Final: period September 30, 2015-September 29, 2017
Today's Date:	November 6, 2017
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Recipient Organization Name:	Jacksonville Main Street
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Farmers Market on the Square Comprehensive (Internet Marketing Program)
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 15-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15FMPPIL0126
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Jacksonville, Illinois
Total Awarded Budget:	39620.36

1. Summarize the community need for the grant work:

In an effort to address the fact that Downtown Jacksonville lies within a designated Food Desert and is adjacent to 2 more Food Deserts, Jacksonville Main Street brought a variety of healthy food options to local consumers comprised mostly of seniors, low-income, and area workers. This action, occurring over the 2016 and 2017 Farmers Market season from May-October, offered greater access to a variety of healthy produce, increased sales for producers, and improved downtown's image with cameras and Wi-Fi for security and publicity.

2. Jacksonville Main Street established several objectives for the Downtown Farmers Market to enhance and expand its sustainability and profitability over the two years of the grant program:

1. make internet access available to all Market participants
2. utilize video cameras as both a security feature for the area of the Market and as a key marketing component
3. encourage vendors to take a greater role in and be more proactive about promoting themselves and the Market itself
4. add more entertainment and educational components to the Market
5. bring in more community partners, sponsors, and products to assist in promoting the Market and increase its sustainability while keeping it free as a community service
6. target new marketing efforts to attract those who rely on non-traditional sources for information

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- i. Goal/Objective 1: Make internet access available to all Market participants
 - a. Progress Made: Free public Wi-Fi and 16 cameras linked to the internet continued to allow access to footage for promotional purposes were installed in the first year, then maintained and operational through the entire grant cycle.
 - b. Impact on Community: Downtown now boasts the largest internet hot-spot in the city, with an average of 250 unique users a day. More than 7500 connections to the Wi-Fi network are made each month and event usage has shown as many as 1,000 users have logged on in just one day. While the local Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) was not able to provide SNAP/LINK capability, vendors at the Market were able to use the Wi-Fi to accept EFT payments, increasing the access to Farmers Market products for hundreds more residents. Vendors also became more adept at using social media to advertise for themselves and the Market on various social media sites with live pictures.
- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Utilize video cameras for security and marketing
 - a. Progress Made: Sixteen camera units connected to a secure Wi-Fi line have been installed and maintained for 24/7 use. Programs to remotely access the recorded camera footage have been installed. Free public Wi-Fi has also been installed and maintained for daily use.
 - b. Impact on Community: To date, the 16 camera units have been used to promote the downtown and have assisted local law enforcement with video in nearly 2 dozen various investigations (vandalism, theft, car accidents, property damage, personal injury claim, etc.). Access to both the public Wi-Fi and the camera footage has increased interest and excitement for downtown, while adding to the perception of safety and security. Moreover, footage from the video collected has been used in promotional campaigns and marketing for not only the Farmers Market, but for other events and the downtown in general.
- iii. Goal/Objective 3: Increase vendor participation in promoting Farmers Market and themselves both online and with traditional means
 - a. Progress Made: During both the 2016 and 2017 Market seasons, vendor input influenced the layout of the market, operational hours, and on-site management. More importantly, interest in managing the Farmers Market has grown among the vendors and their use of marketing methods has increased individually as for the Market as a whole.
 - b. Impact on Community: Vendors saw steady and increased sales over both seasons, with 3 new vendors becoming regulars interested in future participation just this year. They have recruited friends and colleagues to participate in and patronize the Farmers Market, plus presented good ideas for policy changes to the market to allow for more artisan items, which helped make the second season more successful than the first. Vendors developed and used their own Facebook page and plans to use it in future markets have been made. All this input had a positive effect on the Market that community consumers enjoyed.
- iv. Goal/Objective 4: Add more entertainment and educational components to the Market
 - a. Progress Made: Live musical entertainment did not prove as popular or effective as hoped, so was drastically reduced after the first season. Instead, more effort was put into the educational and marketing plans, with extra emphasis on teaching and encouraging the vendors to help advertise and use social media.

- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 2
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 2
- v. Number of new markets established: 3
- vi. Market sales increased 25%
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 24
 - a. Percent Increase: 2016 showed 57% more total vendors participated than 2015 (weekly average of 8 vendors, 25% increase from 6 in 2015); 2017 saw only a 10% increase in total vendors participating throughout the season, but also a 10% average increase)

4. 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?

Social media advertising was crucial in reaching new populations who don't get information by traditional means. By focusing our online advertising to certain groups, social media advertising of new products like grass-fed beef, organic lamb, free range eggs, and gluten-free bakery items also attracts health conscious consumers. This, along with the fresh produce, proved popular with new immigrant residents living downtown. Locating the market near the Department of Children and Family Services offices also increased exposure to a new customer base, with approximately a dozen of their clients becoming regular Farmers Market patrons. While we were unable to obtain SNAP electronic payment equipment from the State Department of Human Resources, one vendor had purchased his own hardware and was able to accept SNAP and EFT payments from customers through the new free Wi-Fi network, adding several low-income clients to the potential client list. Other agencies, like senior programs and county assistance departments were contacted to share information with their clients about the Downtown Farmers Market.

5. Discuss your community partnerships.
- i. Who are your community partners?
For 2017, Jacksonville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, Levitt AMP Jacksonville Concert Series, Chamber of Commerce, City of Jacksonville, Passavant Hospital, Prairie Council on Aging, and Morgan County Health Department were all partners.
 - ii. How have they contributed to the results you've already achieved?
Besides patronizing the Market themselves, all of these partners helped increase visibility and spread the word about the market through their own publications and networking. Some partners assisted with the Wi-Fi and camera installation process, and others promoted the Market to advertise their own agencies.
 - iii. How will they contribute to future results?
All partners will continue helping with marketing and advertising efforts for the 2017 season by sharing Market information through their own media sources and press releases/contacts, plus encouraging many of their own employees to frequent the market. Possible help from the IDHS will also bring a new group of customers to the market and positively impact their lives with healthier food options.
6. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how has their work contributed to the results achieved thus far?

One of the regular vendors has voluntarily assumed the role of Market Manager and collects vendor feedback. Survey feedback about set-up and operations has led to more vendor buy-in, gained support and interest, plus helped us hone overall advertising/marketing strategies that meet the needs of both the vendors and consumers. Camera and Wi-Fi installation contractors handle maintenance of the new technology in this pilot program that advertises and helps secure downtown.

7. Have you publicized any results yet?

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

Local news media coverage and social media reporting spread the word about the free Wi-Fi availability, the Market opening, and the cameras. Usage updates shared with others have also been publicized, primarily through word-of-mouth and organizational newsletters. Advertising and sharing pictures of the Market online also got the word out as regional print, television, and radio ads/appearances promoted the Market.

ii. To whom did you publicize the results?

The general public (regional social media users and traditional news followers) had access to the publicized results of statistics and programs on several occasions. All social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) followers were also exposed to updates about Wi-Fi usage and Market happenings.

iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

Over the course of two years, with an average of 1,500 weekly views throughout the 26-week season, it is estimated the Market publicity reached over 80,000 social media views by more than 3,600 followers online. Another 30,000 radio listeners, 15,000 newspaper subscribers, and 180,000 potential television viewers also got regular updates on the Downtown Farmers Market each season. In all, over 6,000,000 images were shared with nearly 250,000 regional residents. In addition, free Wi-Fi users are automatically directed to the Jacksonville Main Street website, where more information about the Downtown Farmers Market was available.

8. Have you collected any feedback thus far about your work?

User analytics from the public Wi-Fi indicates strong, regular usage and positive response from users. A busy month may see nearly 10,000 connections, but the average is about 7,500, with about 1,000 of those being unique devices. Clearly that aspect is going well. Local businesses and law enforcement have expressed gratitude for the camera footage, which has assisted with numerous cases being resolved. Organizers for other events have used some of the footage for marketing as well. Vendor and customer questionnaires have revealed the largest amount of feedback for the Market operations and policies.

i. If so, how did you collect the information?

Direct surveys were conducted at several points throughout the market as well as during the off season, plus correspondence with partner agencies. Customer feedback on social media was also utilized between seasons. Wi-Fi equipment data recording programs reveal the number of users at any given period since installation, while a tally of the numbers of video that has been reviewed for the police department, city maintenance staff, and private property owners keeps track of its use for security purposes.

ii. What feedback have you collected thus far (specific comments)?

Specific comments over the course of the Downtown Farmers Market include: "...we love having the option to buy produce downtown...", "... I appreciate having the

opportunity to sell and show my products, being new in town,” and “...having smoothies made from fresh, seasonal produce is perfect for the summer!” Overwhelmingly positive feedback came from the actual advertising campaigns, with all vendors being very happy with the level of exposure. Customers were also happy with the new market products available and new patrons were obtained through the expanded social media reach. That said, many other communities within a 1-hour driving distance now hosting their own Farmers Markets, so the impact was felt in the decline of regional vendors, making the addition of handcrafted goods (soaps, lotions, potted plants, etc.) crucial to the success of the Market. The Downtown Farmers Market ensured that its day and time did not conflict with any other regional markets and that advertising was far reaching.

9. Budget Summary:

- i. There were no revisions to the budget. Some line items varied from the original estimates, but remained within 20% of the original proposal.
- ii. Total amount spent during grant period (September 30, 2015-September 29, 2017):

	2015-2017	4/1/17-9/29/17
Personnel:	5131.15	2000
Contractual:	20717.17	6840.92
Equipment Purchases:	13523.88	
Travel:	0	
Supplies:	261.40	76
Other:	0	
Indirect Costs:	0	
TOTAL:	39633.60	8916.92

- iii. Amount of matching funds/in-kind contributions used during the reporting period: \$876.24
- iv. Did the project generate any income? Yes
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used? \$876.24 was generated by the vendor sponsors, who specifically paid for additional advertising opportunities they wanted, along with two months of camera maintenance. (A budget overage of \$13.34 was paid for by Jacksonville Main Street.)

10. Summarize unexpected delays or problems (if applicable).

- i. State the issue(s) and the reasoning behind its/their occurrence:
 - Entertainment was not as popular as hoped, so the second season, it was dramatically scaled back.
- ii. How did the issues affect timelines?
 - N/A
- iii. How did the issues affect the measurable results?
 - N/A
- iv. How did the issues affect the budget?
 - The money saved on the entertainment was used for alternative advertising and marketing.
- v. How did your organization resolve the issue(s)?

Since the entertainment was a marketing concept, the funds stayed in the marketing category and the project remained financially on target.

11. Summary: During the final season, we measured the success of our marketing plan and collected feedback from vendors and customers by attendance and sales. The information was compiled with the previously collected and reported information to compile the Final Report.

All the goals initially set were met, with some being more successful than others. The Market day (Wednesday) was maintained, additional print advertising and flyers were produced, and social media and broadcast ads were greatly expanded. Camera and Wi-Fi updates and maintenance occurred also, enabling opportunities for marketing to continue. New educational opportunities were included with the Market to help promote the Market and healthy eating choices, and with the new managers, vendors, products, and partners, the final season was successful. Vendors have stepped forward to take over management and operation of the Market for 2018, and the local businesses and the law enforcement community are planning to assist financially with maintaining the camera and Wi-Fi network, making the largest parts of this project sustainable into the future.