

**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:	September 30, 2015, through September 29, 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	John Pinter
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Recipient Organization Name:	Farmer's Market, Inc. (South Bend Farmer's Market)
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	South Bend Farmer's Market (SBFM) Project
Grant Agreement Number:	15FMPPIN0067
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	South Bend, IN
Total Awarded Budget:	\$99,973.80

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: _____

1. **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.**

- i. **Goal/Objective 1:**

Grow regional farmer use of South Bend Farmers Market (SBFM) as a means of direct sales to consumers: a) Expand, to 30, the number of farmers selling at the SBFM; b) Support farmer’s successful use of SBFM through development and growth of consumer users

- a. Progress Made:

A total of 10 new farmers, for a total of 32, became regular vendors at the South Bend Farmer’s Market over the course of the project’s time (one new vendor in 2016 did not return in the summer of 2017).

As noted in #2 below, the SBFM made utilization more attractive for farmer vendors primarily through implementation of strategies to bring more shoppers into the building. This was accomplished chiefly by increasing the offerings of farm produce, as well as addressing other consumer wishes identified in Goal 2.

- b. Impact on Community:

Additional farmers vending at the SBFM has made the business a much more vital resource to the community. The range of new farmers at the SBFM includes a strong mix of traditional products and some unusual ones, thus increasing offerings for the consuming public. New farmer vendors have expanded offerings to include maple syrup, year ‘round lettuces grown in vertical farms, herbs, shrimp, and tubers (other new farmers added to the offerings of readily available produce). This has expanded the offerings of the SBFM to the larger community and thus increased the availability of fresh, local foods in traditional and year ‘round settings.

- ii. **Goal/Objective 2:**

Expand regional community awareness of Farmers Market of South Bend to increase shopping: a) Utilizing data developed by marketing research for the SBFM Project, create regular marketing opportunities based on heightened awareness of consumer needs; b) Develop opportunities for key farmer vendors of SBFM to develop close relationships with clientele, including increased positive awareness of vendor farm operations, customer relationship management (CRM) opportunities, and other direct awareness by regional shoppers; c) Create web-based, interactive connections between farming vendors, their stalls, and ‘real-time’ information about crops and harvesting opportunities (QR codes, social media, etc.)

a. Progress Made:

The project engaged Vennli, a tech startup company based in South Bend, to help SBFM to better understand its farming vendors, shoppers and LI/LA users. As a result, the South Bend Farmer's Market better understands its desired ideal customer bases, and also helped the market board to learn how to improve its infrastructure to appeal to both vendors and shoppers. Among the results of the project that directly addressed feedback from the Venlli surveying and thus community benefits:

- Better internet access for consumers and vendors
- Increased use of point of service sales for vendors due to better security and increased bandwidth
- Mobile-enabled website for shoppers
- Ability of vendors to use tablets for increased surveying (on-site) by sellers and consumers
- Improved restaurant collections of sales and use of non-cash payments
- Increased market sourcing for in-house restaurant

b. Impact on Community:

The community of shoppers and potential shoppers received the positive impact generated from the suggestions that came from this objective. The project engaged a range of consumer users to find out their most important needs and desires, and then responded directly regarding many of these marketing need. As a result, the community served by the South Bend Farmer's Market has a much more attractive market facility, and much stronger awareness of the offerings of locally grown agricultural products. Shoppers have better access, easier shopping and an ability to determine available products.

These results come from technological upgrades provided through grant funding that allowed this include:

1. Locally accessible 'free Wi-Fi', now widely available to the public
2. Enhanced secure Wi-Fi for vendors that meets Secure Payment Processing System requirements
3. Social media connectivity between consumers, the SBFM, and individual vendors
4. Mobile-enabled website for SBFM, highlighting available produce
5. Increased connectivity with local farmers for shoppers that enhanced farm-to-table understanding between farmers and shoppers (not all farmers readily participate, but a growing number have benefitted)

iii. **Goal/Objective 3:**

Increase ability of individuals from nearby "low income/low access" neighborhoods in South Bend and nearby communities to access South Bend Farmers Market: a) Develop outreach with area WIC, SNAP, and WorkOne offices, as well as nonprofit referral sources, for information about SBFM; b) Develop incentive program for Transpos bus

usage to access SBFM on open market days; c) Study feasibility of developing shuttle from proposed South Bend Promise Zone areas to SBFM on trial basis for summer, 2016; d) Explore the possibility of creating a delivery service, utilizing the successful model of Crisp! Produce and other creative means of getting fresh foods to low income consumers

a. Progress Made:

A separate survey was conducted by VENNLI to address LI/LA shoppers and potential shoppers. The SBFM used its tablets, purchased by the project funding, to do surveying at the SBFM, La Casa de Amistad, and at locations where LI/LA users might receive info on benefits (WIC office, YMCA, LI housing locations, food pantries, etc.). There were significant barriers that were found, including client privacy issues, language barriers, and other problems which kept client count lower than desired, but within the bounds of the expectations.

Barriers to use by LI/LA users included:

- Awareness of the SBFM as a resource
- Language/cultural barriers with many vendors
- Perceptions of negative attitudes by vendors and SBFM staff
- Transportation/hours

The local bus provider, TRANSPO, provided a trial of runs to the market on a few market Saturdays, but very few users were gained as a result. A local provider of LI senior housing, however, did create a trial run of residents to the SBFM with the provider's own equipment (in addition to a supermarket run); the provider may repeat these efforts in 2018.

A group of local design students from the University of Notre Dame created an interactive program of understanding needs of low-income shoppers currently or potentially utilizing the SBFM. In addition, the project utilized a group of interns who spoke Spanish to reach out to potential shoppers from the local Latino/a communities at a food pantry, to market the SBFM and determine consumer needs. Lastly, the SBFM worked with the new Food Alliance to help determine community needs around food security and nutrition, and the niche that the SBFM might play; the consultant remains a part of this group, post-grant.

SBFM vendors already utilize payments from SNAP and WIC, but opted to not utilize 'matching' grant payments. As noted in a subsequent section, there is no consensus by farmer vendors about the desirability of increased LI/LA use.

An effort to replicate a direct-to-consumer (Crisp!) delivery service was not successful; the model developed in Chicago was explored, but its model did not involve direct use of farmer's market produce and was not readily transferable to South Bend as a result of that and the need for a transportation system to be in place. There remains some internal resistance to the populations, as described in a later section.

b. Impact on Community:

The outreach to LI/LA provider has resulted in raising local awareness of the SB Farmer's Market and their willingness to refer or recommend shopper use of the SBFM. Barriers to use of the market were identified and to some extent overcome.

An important positive impact on the LI-LA shopping community is that utilization of SNAP and WIC was strong with vendors (based on their reporting and that of SBFM). WIC use at the market remains relatively small, due to seasonality, but SNAP benefit usage increased especially with vendors that were able to install point of service readers, allowing the LI-LA users to buy direct and skip 'trading' for scrip at the office. Eight farm vendors added these services over the time of the grant, allowing for the ease of access and lowered stigmatization that paying directly allowed.

iv. Goal/Objective 4:

Create opportunities for SBFM with collaborative projects in community health programming: a) Develop relationships with diabetes and chronic disease prevention and management (with YMCA, Kroc, Memorial, others); b) Encourage cross-promotional opportunities for individuals who might benefit from exercise and better eating habits to get fresh food from the SBFM via promotions, giveaways, and other ideas generated by the SBFM Project; c) Utilize SBFM Community Room space for community demonstrations on preparing healthy, low cost meals and other demonstration programs

a. Progress Made:

The underlying intent of this goal was to connect SBFM farmers with potential consumers through their purchase of produce that would meet their own health goals, and to help position the market as a resource to organizations that have a primary concern with health. The project created a number of connections which will be ongoing, and helpful in creating awareness of the healthy benefits of fresh foods:

1. The South Bend Farmer's Market is now a strong partner with the Food Alliance, led by the St. Joseph County Health Department, which has a strong desire to reduce food insecurity.
2. The YMCA of Michiana, a nearby facility, has adopted a diabetes prevention program and a program to help those with pre-diabetes to cook fruits and vegetables as a part of their home diet.
3. The South Bend Farmer's Market has reengaged in a 'matching funds' program with SNAP users through an application for 2018.

b. Impact on Community:

The South Bend Farmer's Market helped local providers of health and nutrition education to encourage use of fresh produce and other locally grown fruits and vegetables as a part of their solutions for their clients. These shoppers have

built their opportunities to buy more farmer's market goods.

v. **Goal/Objective 5:**

Increase capacity of SBFM to develop regional destination for food lovers and tourism by closely tying with downtown South Bend redevelopment projects and regional visitor's bureau (Visit South Bend/Mishawaka): a) Develop sourcing strategies with newly emerging eateries and initiate 'farm to restaurant table' opportunities, with concentration in Downtown South Bend restaurants and new residential areas; b) Create promotional events to encourage visitors to South Bend to make a visit to the SBFM an important leg of the journey, including ND football games, college graduations, and visits to other cultural institutions.

a. Progress Made:

The project made efforts to work with Visit South Bend, the local tourism bureau, with minimal success. This goal was deemphasized after determination that it would have limited impact on direct shopping use of the market.

b. Impact on Community:

The impact on the community is very limited at this point.

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, 2015). Include further explanation if necessary.

- i. **Number of direct jobs created:** 1
- ii. **Number of jobs retained:** 1
- iii. **Number of indirect jobs created:** 1
- iv. **Number of markets expanded:** 1
- v. **Number of new markets established:** 0
- vi. **Market sales increased by \$ n/a and increased by an average of 7.2%¹**
 - a. **Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:**
 - Percent Increase:** 31 % through fall, 2017
 - b. Actual numbers:** A total of 10 additional farmers utilized the SBFM through fall, 2017; one farm that was added did not return in summer 2017.

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?

LI/LA Populations:

Yes, the customer base was expanded as measured by use of SNAP and other such benefits programs, and as a result of collaboration with organizations that serve LI-LA populations. . The

¹ Farm vendors each completed a range of increase/decrease from the start of the grant; 38% reported an average increase of 7.2%, and 23% reported flat sales. Dollar volume increases were not reportable due to privacy.

project conducted outreach with the intention of determining how low income/low access users felt about the SBFM. There was important data gained about how these communities, particularly Latino/a populations, SNAP users, and WIC clients feel about shopping at the SBFM. La Casa de Amistad, a strong community partner, provided translation services to the project and great ideas about outreach.

New Businesses/Community Groups/Faith Community Outreach:

The SBFM is a part of a growing market district, and outreach to businesses in that nearby region was undertaken to encourage their use of the market by employees and residents. Some of this benefit is indirect; new ethnic populations reached have established short-term vending operations (produce and prepared foods), and outreach to church/faith communities has resulted in more diverse populations finding 'home' foods they can prepare from produce and spices sold at the market.

Civic Engagement:

The project consultant has worked with a number of non-agricultural businesses and organizations to attempt to engage the SBFM beyond its core audience. These are discussed in the subsequent section.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

i. Who are your community partners?

The leading community partners for the South Bend Farmer's Market for this project were:

La Casa de Amistad
University of Notre Dame (Design Department)
Food Alliance, St. Joseph County Health Department, and member entities
YMCA of Michiana
Kroc Center/Salvation Army
The Armory, South Bend

ii. How have they contributed to the results you've already achieved?

Low Income/Low Access: The Food Alliance and La Casa de Amistad were most helpful in engaging potential growth among LI/LA users and people who are not native English speakers. The Notre Dame Design Department was helpful in gaining ideas that engaged LI/LA users, and provided three project designs to the market on removing perceived barriers to use of the SBFM by LI/LA users.

Commercial Opportunities: The Armory is establishing a new commercial kitchen/event center across the street from the SBFM; it will open in late 2017/early 2018, and has asked to collaborate with the SBFM on parking, and use of their commercial kitchen space by ethnic food preparers who buy goods from SBFM farmers.

iii. **How will they contribute to future results?**

The SBFM will need to build in capacity to continue on the positive developments. It has been the recommendation of the project consultant that the SBFM hire a full-time market manager to continue these external opportunities.

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

The project was managed by an independent contractor, and the major marketing piece is also being led by a contractor, Vennli, Inc. There were numerous other 'outsourced' parts of the program, including translation (La Casa de Amistad), IT, and communications/printing (501Center).

6. **Have you publicized any results yet?**

The ongoing results of the work of the project, and recommendations made to the board and the shareholders were publicized at annual meetings in 2016 and 2017. The SBFM board will make determination on final results publicity. Copies of the findings and reports have been provided to the USDA.

7. **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?**

No, this was not a goal of the project

8. **Lessons Learned:**

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).

Overall Lessons Learned:

Ownership: The SBFM is investor owned by shareholders who are mostly long-term farmers and themselves vendors. Its 'business' is renting space to vendors, and operating the restaurant. Owners of the market's shares have their primary business as their main source of revenues, and thus keeping their own costs low as vendors is sometimes in conflict with the needs of the SBFM to upgrade and provide a modern, enjoyable shopping experience. The enhanced shopping experience will continue to grow its shopper base, so there is some natural tension.

Competition: An additional lesson learned is about competitors. The SBFM believed its main competition is from a local food coop, but research developed with the VENNLI consumer preferences survey showed clear information that local grocery stores are the true competition for shoppers, and that Chicago area farmers markets are the biggest direct competitor for farmer vendors.

Success Factors: The two most consistent factors of other successful markets that were discovered, for the benefit of the South Bend Farmer's Market, were:

- Successful markets had a chief staff leader who operated as a CEO
- Successful markets had a consistent brand identity that was found onsite, online, and in its advertising

Areas for Continued Exploration:

Change Management: There was a concern among some farmer vendors feared that the grant's emphasis gaining farm vendors would negatively affect non-farm vendors, upon whom the SBFM is dependent for its ability to have relevant product offerings year 'round; given the Midwest climate, non-local produce as well as non-agricultural offerings help keep the market vibrant even though they are not the focus of the FMPP grant. There was no evidence that concentrating grant resources on farmer development was a negative for the non-farm vendors, however.

Inclusion of Disadvantaged Shoppers: Additionally, there is some latent negative reaction and resentment towards LI/LA shoppers by a segment of the vendor community, though this was by no means universal or even a majority issue. A few vendors considered efforts to increase access by marginalized populations to be against the desires of the SBFM, and these caused obstruction of encouraging programming designed to increase use and acceptance of SNAP, WIC and other benefit programs. Further, this leads to non-interest by these populations in vending at the market, despite great evidence that this was a boon to markets in other cities as an entrepreneurial opportunity.

Competition: A small but competing group of local farmer's markets came into the local community during the 2 year program; one is a non-fixed site operation, and one is part of a nonprofit entity that has started a farm operation. Both are small, focused on LI/LA users and small farms, and include helping to establish community or home-based gardens. These will be competitors for the SBFM for farmer participation and shoppers.

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

The key component goals of increasing farmers' access and the shopping public were met.

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

It is helpful for the project to have an outsider engaged, but it would have helped the local project tremendously to have a single point of contact vs. a board that tries to

operate by consensus.

9. 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.**

The project will, hopefully, influence future outreach ideas. It is the conclusion of the project consultant that the key need for this to occur is to create a CEO/Manager position for the South Bend Farmer's Market.

- 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?**

The following five (5) recommendations were provided to the South Bend Farmer's Market as the 'takeaways' from the two year experience:

- A. South Bend Farmer's Market Board Engagement: Redirect efforts of the SBFM Board to provide increased strategic leadership for the business, while helping plan to move operational involvement of the board to more 'day-to-day' operations
2. Staffing: *Plan for Professional staff leadership of the SB Farmer's Market*
 - A. Create position for CEO of SBFM and hire a CEO for the SBFM
 - B. Provide necessary support for CEO to conduct the business of the SBFM
 - C. Develop a highly customer-friendly engagement for staff of the SBFM for vendors and other customers
 - D. Continue to engage contractual relationships with vendors to manage financial reporting, IT, marketing and other functional areas of the market's operations
3. Brand/Logo: *Redevelop marketing and brand for market*
 - A. Develop branding plan for SBFM that considers business's core values
 - B. Redirect brand logo and marketing collateral of SBFM and utilize it exclusively
4. Build on Property Utilization: *Create opportunities for revenue generation with Market properties up to seven days per week*
 - A. Explore opportunities to utilize SBFM grounds on non-market days for revenue production
 - B. Benchmark with other successful Farmer's Markets for ways to integrate events and revenue opportunities that provide net income and positive promotions without creating additional time requirements on current ownership

5. Community Leadership: *Capture leadership of the newly forming "Market District"*
 - A. Convene business neighbors in the area of the market and surrounding community for areas of cooperative ventures and planning
 - B. Specific focus on Newman Center, other food sellers and The Brick
 - C. Encourage engagement by City of South Bend and regional planners to develop area in ways that enhance SBFM goals
 - D. Continue to expand on tourist opportunities for SBFM to increase draw to the local community