

**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, 2015 – September 29, 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	James Stark
Authorized Representative Phone:	724-430-3011
Authorized Representative Email:	jstark@fccaa.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc.
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Mobile Farmers Market for SW PA
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15FMPPPA0113
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Uniontown, PA
Total Awarded Budget:	\$100,000

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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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:**

- Promote the RFEC as a marketing resource to local/regional farmers*

- a. Progress Made:**

- The Republic Food Enterprise Center (RFEC) has made great progress in promoting the RFEC as a marketing resource to local and regional farmers in Southwest Pennsylvania. In the last three years we have directly reached over 8,500 consumers, with nearly half (4,200) of those consumers reached just this past year. Our farmers market, our main tool for the marketing and sale of products, participated consistently in 12 farmers markets this year from June through October as follows; Bethel Park Farmers Market, East End Community Farm Stand, Liberty Center Farm Market, Homestead, Uniontown Farmers Market, Ligoner Farm Market, Connellsville Farm Market, Shady Side Farm Market, Uniontown Hospital Farm Stand, Uniontown Senior Center, Masontown Farm Stand, and Christian Klay Farm Stand.

- b. Impact on Community:**

- We have raised RFEC brand awareness throughout SW Pennsylvania, gaining credibility and increasing our presence throughout the region. This has resulted in an improved market, increasing sales of value added products as well as fresh fruits and vegetables sourced from farmers. Our farmers markets continue to become more profitable and serve as another method of outreach for the additional services our organization offers including our shared use kitchen, business startup initiation and support services, Community Supported Agriculture Program, Farm to Table Catering Services, and a new \$1.75 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Power initiative designed to further boost agricultural production in the region.

- Additionally, the General Manager and Marketing Director is continuing to discuss the national school lunch program and the addition of local farm-fresh IQF value-added bulk vegetables to help keep tray cost down.

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

- Promote and expand farmers’ markets throughout the Fayette County area by accepting SNAP benefits and by implementing pop-up markets in food deserts*

- a. Progress Made:**

- Previously, the RFEC has added the farmers’ market voucher program (PA Department of Agriculture – Farmers Market Nutrition Program). The RFEC has expanded these services into Homewood and Homestead (both food deserts) in Allegheny County. In addition, the

RFEC has provided and increasing number of markets each month throughout the service area during the growing season.

RFEC has successfully implemented the use of a digital Point of Sale system that allows us to accept SNAP benefits at all Farmers Markets. We ensure a sign is prominently displayed at each of our markets letting the public know that SNAP benefits are welcome. Additionally we accept and partner with local agencies to promote the use of WIC and Seniors Farmers Market Checks.

b. Impact on Community:

RFEC has serviced over 1,000 SNAP recipients at various Farmers Markets this past year. Ensuring the underserved individuals and families in our community have consistent access to adequate nutrition helps mitigate other health and social disparities. Additionally, the opportunity to access fresh produce from local farmers provides a sense of community while positively impacting the local economy.

In addition to ensuring the use of EBT cards at the various farmers markets that exist, we ensured pop-up markets took place in food deserts throughout Southwestern PA where residents often lack adequate transportation to travel to a local market for fresh produce.

We also placed pop up markets at the Uniontown Hospital and Liberty Center in Pittsburgh. Attendance at markets was overwhelming. Senior participation was huge as about 500 seniors used their SNAP benefits or Farmers Market Checks. We supported Fayette County's WIC program by strategically placing pop-up markets outside of their office locations in an effort to enhance WIC participants use of their Farmer's Market checks. This strategy also proved successful.

iii. Goal/Objective 3:

Promote the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.

a. Progress Made:

Participation in our Community Supported Agriculture Program has been less than desired. As a low-income community, many residents are not willing to pay the "buy-in" cost associated with the program. We likely have not targeted the correct population and are currently beginning a new marketing strategy for the program. Additionally we are considering ways in which we can encourage SNAP recipients to purchase weekly CSA shares. Previously we partnered with Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc. to supply 650 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program bags to Uniontown's underserved communities. The program was implemented in the East End neighborhoods of Uniontown, Pennsylvania. These neighborhoods (East End, Gallatin Avenue, and LaFayette – Census tracts 42051262300 and 42051261900) are frequently identified as the most challenged areas of Fayette County. We would like to try to implement a system in which we can continue to offer this through SNAP benefit or a grant funded program.

We will also market the CSA program in more affluent areas such as downtown Pittsburgh's Liberty Center where we host a Farmers Market and lunchtime catering twice a week to business men and women. This will likely increase buy-in and help improve outcomes for our program.

b. Impact on Community:

The CSA program has had little impact on the community in the past 6 months but we feel as we have raised RFEC brand awareness and continue to increase our presence throughout the region the potential for a successful CSA program is still existent. We look forward to making this program work and benefit farmers and residents alike.

iv. Goal/Objective 4:

Work with emergency food networks to collect, buy, and distribute surplus produce to the food bank network, and process items into products with a longer shelf life for distribution to low income households

a. Progress Made:

The RFEC continues to utilize its delivery vans to reach food deserts, food banks, low-income neighborhoods, farmers'/pop-up markets, etc., located throughout Fayette and the surrounding counties.

In collaboration with a longstanding partner of RFEC, the Bruderhof Community, and the Fayette County Community Action Food Bank, we were able to collect and distribute over 900 heads of lettuce to food pantries throughout Fayette County.

Additionally we worked with the Pittsburgh Food Bank to repurpose and create a longer shelf life for 500oz of sweet corn which was then distributed to low income families.

Our RFEC kitchen has also been working with Fayette County Community Action Agency's Circles program to provide prepared dinners in support of their programming, feeding 30 low income individuals, once a month, with surplus food, as they learn tools and life skills to help work their way out of poverty.

We also sourced and provided 352 low-income individuals with a \$10 bad of produce.

b. Impact on Community:

RFEC recently purchased two vans to support us in our various initiatives. Now utilizing two trucks and two vans we have significantly increased our capacity to pick up produce from farmers, deliver produce to end-markets, operate markets, distribute CSA boxes, create and sell value-added foods, and ultimately better serve the regional population. The use of these delivery vans allowed the RFEC to expand

As we continue our efforts to promote the economical, physical and environmental health of our community and work towards a sustainable solution to issues involving hunger and malnutrition, we also work with community based organizations and local food banks to attempt to provide emergency hunger relief to the many food insecure families living in the region.

v. **Goal/Objective 5:**

Work with nutrition education providers and service delivery organizations to expand education to low income residents.

a. **Progress Made:**

This year we worked with Fayette County Community Action Agency to develop easy to prepare recipes using fresh local ingredients that could be found at our farmers markets. When Fayette County Community Action Agency would distribute Farmers' Market Checks to senior clients and WIC clients, they would also distribute recipe cards designed to provide them with information fit for their specific needs. Low income residents in our community face many barriers. Some residents don't have the space to store fruits and vegetables, while others don't have to utensils to cook with. In extreme cases, we have residents who don't have stoves or electricity. The recipe cards we created took into account the various barriers our residents face each day.

c. **Impact on Community:**

We have estimated that we have reached approximately 145 families with our recipe cards as well as additional cooking materials made available through our partnership with Penn State Cooperative Extension. Additional through the implementation of Serve Safe instruction, our General Manager has certified 6 students to become leaders in the kitchen.

This summer the RFEC partnered with Experience WORKS, a youth employment program that offers employment and training opportunities to low income youth ages 16-24. The program is funded through the Westmoreland Fayette Workforce Investment Board. Youth received onsite training and job experience in the warehouse and at the farmers markets.

vi. **Goal/Objective 6:**

Promote value-added local produce and value-added food products into regional food deserts, restaurants, schools and other institutions supporting a comprehensive response to local food access, farm and nutrition issues.

a. **Progress Made:** RFEC has developed an extensive network of partnering producers, businesses and EMOs. These partners use the center to make value added products, create recipes, test recipes, buy and sell produce, and purchase products. We also work with a number of producers to create value added products. In working with individual growers and producers we have been able to create and array of products including

pickles, relishes, sauces, spice rubs, sauerkraut, spaghetti sauce, chili base, jarred seasoned peppers, BBQ sauce, jelly, tapenade, biscotti, beets, salsa, pies, and many sauces. Additionally, we minimally process the following for resale; corn, potatoes (for French fries) and fruit. We continue to work with Jordan Banana to aggregate and distribute produce.

The RFEC has able to recruit additional farms/organizations. Those farms include: JPS Farm and Market in Scottsdale, PA; Lords Farm in Madison, PA; Logan Farm in Irwin, PA; Milroy Farms in Somerset, PA; Mobilia Farms in North East, PA; Burnt Cabins Grist Mill in Burt Cabins, PA; Country Side Produce Auction Salisbury, PA (they work with over 20 farms in the region). In addition to the new farms, the RFEC is working with Laurel Vista Farms, Hill top Growers, and Christner Farms to produce value-added products. The RFEC continues to work with Jordan Banana Company and Fredericktown Butcher Shop to enhance their respective product lines - adding more fresh local produce.

In addition, the RFEC created six new “food-related” businesses - Jones Foods, Inc.; Abundance Foods, LLC; Hawee Style-BBQ; My Pop’s Specialty Foods; Glenn’s Cookies; and Ideal Grain Free Granola.

We create value added products for the following companies: Harvest Valley Farms, Art King; Sava View; Laurel Vista Farms; Emerald Valley; Golden Harvest Acres; Cucina Calabrese; Larry Roby

The following companies use our shared use kitchen to prepare, cook , and package their products: Glenn Cookies; Ernie’s; Mr. G’z; Nancy Bee’s; Hawgee Style BBQ; Sheffer’s Market; Tracy Cotton; Co-Co Elite

b. Impact on Community:

We have doubled the number of clients we are working with and continue to increase awareness surrounding the Farm to Table movement, nutrition education, a healthy local economy, and increased access to nutrition in our area. We have created jobs and contributed to the local economy.

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, 20__). Include further explanation if necessary.

- i. Number of direct jobs created: 8**
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 30**
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 4**
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 7**
- v. Number of new markets established: 2**
- vi. Market sales increased by \$10,500 and increased by 110%.**
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 27**
- viii. Percent Increase: 75%**

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?

The RFEC, Fayette County Community Action Agency, and Fay-Penn Economic Development Council have established the Fayette County Food Council. The Food Council has been dedicated to the local food supply, establishing a food co-op, developing and expanding the Buy-Local program, promoting healthy eating habits and diets, and other food-related issues.

Through the food council and networking efforts have successfully increased outreach in low income communities.

We strategically held farmers markets at the East End United Community Center, the Uniontown Adult Recreation Center, the Homestead Farmers Market and Republic Food Enterprise Center Market in Republic PA. We reached over 1,000 families last summer many of whom were low income. Through mobile markets, the RFEC was able to take farmers markets to low income, underserved consumers. The RFEC vans visited senior centers and community centers through-out Fayette County. Historically, these locations are some of the hardest areas to reach and provide residents with fresh produce. This initiative enabled the RFEC to provide residents with fresh produce.

Additionally we increased our outreach effort by partnering with non-profit organizations and programs that work to improve nutritionally awareness and increase access to healthy and fresh foods such as WIC and the local food banks.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. **Who are your community partners?** The RFEC is currently working with 60 farmers, 16 entrepreneurs/multiple businesses to source, aggregate, or produce products. Addition recent partnerships include the Uniontown Redevelopment Authority, Connellsville Redevelopment Authority, Fayette County Cultural Trust, East End Community Center, Masontown Matters and the Ligonier Farmers Market Association. Additionally we have strengthened partnerships with the Southwestern PA Division Chief of the PA Department of Agriculture, Pittsburgh Farm to Table, Farm Aid, Good Taste Pittsburgh, and Liberty Center. Other significant partnerships that have helped us in our FMPP efforts include Greene County Department of Economic Development, PA Department of Agriculture, Fayette County's Redevelopment Authority and the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce. Other relationships with organizations such as Rural LISC, the Community Action Partnership, Policy Link, the Food Trust, the C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University, the PA Association of Sustainable Agriculture, California University of PA continue to grow stronger.

ii. **How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?** These organizations have helped to increase RFEC brand awareness throughout Southwestern PA and have improved our ability to network successfully, recruit talented team members to serve as members of RFEC, have provided support for additional partnerships and have back us as we further our ventures.

iii. **How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?**
These organizations are committed to the overall mission of RFEC, committed to our success and committed to the health of our community. They are committed to continue to advance the mission of RFEC and support our initiatives, working to bridge the gap from Farm to Table in our region and strengthen our agricultural economy.

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

We are not currently using contractors

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

- i. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?** We have not publicized results but we continue to make the community aware of our farmers markets via social media
- ii. **To whom did you publicize the results?** Future potential publication of results will be made via social media, local radio, local newspaper
- iii. **How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?** Through these methods we will reach several thousands of local residents included elected officials/ local politicians/etc.

***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).**

Please find photos of our farmers market attached.

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 are in close communication with our community, our supporters and key stakeholders in our community
What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?
1. The Uniontown Redevelopment Authority stated that the farmers markets are a big asset for the city of Uniontown. Many residents of downtown have no other place to get fresh produce since they lack adequate transportation.

2. The Executive Director of the East End Community Center stated that the residents in his community truly love coming to the market. Many residents in the East End of Uniontown and surrounding neighborhoods have no way to get to a store that would offer them fresh produce and the ability to except the Farmers Market Checks they receive through assistance programs.

3. The Executive Director of the Connellsville Redevelopment Authority stated that the residents and community will continue to support the farmers market and wish that the market was year round. They enjoy supporting the local farmers and local venders. They believe that opportunities for residents such as the farmers market we bring continue to add value to the community.

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?** no
 - a. **If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?**

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).

We specifically learned lessons surrounding staffing:

- 1. Make sure enough staff have been hired and trained in time for the season
- 2. Make sure staff and volunteers who are helping at the markets are locals
- 3. Make sure staff are knowledgeable and familiar with types of foods and where the foods are coming from

Additional lessons

- 1. We need more farmers in our area to purchase greens from
 - 2. We found mobile markets in and around senior centers were successful and greatly benefited the senior populations as well as our market sales
- ii. **If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:** The area that we felt that we did not achieve our goals is in the CSA program. We think that the cost was a major issue considering that many of the individuals we reach are underserved and could afford the CSA program. This year we are looking at the potential for individuals to be able to use their SNAP benefits every week to purchase a CSA bag. Additionally, we will reach out to various communities we may not normally

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:

While we have greatly grown our network of support over the past year and established a routine and schedule for the 2018 season, we have learned that we need to allow more time for planning each aspect of our market program; from identifying and confirming farmers who we will be purchasing produce from to details surrounding marketing our program. There are many components that go in to making our markets run smoothly and many of them were learned along the way.

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.

Our farmers markets have been a great asset for the community and we will continue to host them and expand our reach beyond Fayette County. They have also been a great marketing tool for other initiatives that RFEC has moved forward in the community, raising awareness of the need to strengthen the agricultural community in the region. Because of this project, we have leveraged funds to support a Farm to School initiative as well as an ARC Power grant. These projects will continue to strengthen the agricultural economy in SW Pennsylvania, creating jobs and supporting farmers while providing local food to residents throughout the region. Because of the success of our farmers markets we opened a permanent store in Republic PA which provides nutritional relief in an area defined as a food desert. Another permanent store will open in Masontown in the coming months. Additionally we opened a seasonal holiday store in the Uniontown Mall. In 2018 we will host 4 additional stational farmers markets and 4 additional pop up markets at senior centers, creating 6 new jobs and retaining 38 jobs.

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?

1. Increase nutrition education for consumers
2. Increase opportunities for education surrounding the preparation and cooking of local produce (collaborate with schools in area to support this effort)
3. Increase attendance of farmers at markets
4. Strategize with farmers on ways to help them successfully attend markets
5. Because farmers are understaffed- find ways RFEC can support