

**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](mailto: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.

<b>Report Date Range:</b> <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2015 – Sep 30, 2017
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	Richard Cavey
<b>Authorized Representative Phone:</b>	(276) 773-2547
<b>Authorized Representative Email:</b>	Independencefarmersmarket@gmail.com
<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Independence Farmers Market
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	The Independence Farmers Market Project
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15FMPPX-VA-0385
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2015
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Independence, Virginia
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$82,414

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: Grow customer attendance at the market from within the local populace to include low income/low access residents, and expand awareness of the market outside of the local populace to population concentration areas in an agri-tourism effort.
    - a. Progress Made: Prior to project start date, attendance at the market averaged 3525 customers per year. **Over the grant period annual attendance averaged 5875 customers, a 60% increase** which included low income/access residents and tourist from larger population centers.
    - b. Impact on Community: The community is now well aware of their local food buying opportunities. The documented increase in customers not only reflects this, but so does increased attendance at events the Farmers Market sponsors, such as the three farm to table dinners offered to attendees at the Mount Rogers Naturalist Rally and two charity “Empty Bowls” dinners sponsored by the Farmers Market to raise funds for food challenged residents. Both event coordinators attributed the Farmers Market food as key elements in setting new attendance and fund raising records. Recipients of the federal **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) responded well to our campaign, increasing from 44 to 64 participating customers, a 45% increase** over previous participation.
  - ii. Goal/Objective 2: Expand direct to consumer sales opportunities for participating farmers/producers by offering year round market, expansion to multiple market days, and adding branding/marketing to participating farmers.
    - a. Progress Made: During the Grant period the year round **Online Market served 51 farmers/producers, and 247 customers, 23 customers used the Market for the first time. 4,967 items were ordered for a total of \$40,464.24.** The Online sales currently **represent 15% of all sales activity** and continue to grow along with other market opportunities. The Wednesday evening pickup for the Online Market has replaced the outdoor Wednesday Market with great success. Marketing /branding products developed by grant partner organizations Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) and Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), Rooted in Appalachia and Appalachian Grown materials (produce bags, labels, cartons, etc) were purchased and distributed to vendors. The expansion of the market to a neighboring community (Fries, VA) on Sundays and technical assistance provided to the new Hillsville, VA market offered participating farmers/producers two additional opportunities for sales. Through the Farmers Market Connector service, farmers/producers gained access to several restaurants and retailers further increasing sales opportunities.
    - b. Impact on Community: The impact to the farming community was significant. Nearly all locally produced and consumed food passed through one of the Farmers market retail/delivery operations (Open Air Markets, Online Market, and Connector Service). **Total sales over all operations during the grant period were \$282,104, a 54% increase over the preceding two years.**

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: **3** – Two part time employees were added to the Farmers Market staff, one to manage and operate the Online Market, Connector Service and Kids Activities during the open air market, the other was hired to perform outreach activities to include development of marketing materials, event posters, radio ads, organizing farm to table and festival events, and expanding new markets.
  - ii. Number of jobs retained: **1** – The open air farmers market manager was retained and continued to operate the market, with expanded duties to include providing technical assistance to creating two new farmers markets in neighboring communities.
  - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: **4** - Vendors reported two internships and two part time employees were added to participating farms due to increased demand for locally sourced produce
  - iv. Number of markets expanded: **1** – the Independence Farmers Market expanded its Online Market from seasonally operated to year around.
  - v. Number of new markets established: **2**– The Fries, VA market is a direct result of our outreach and technical assistance efforts. It was initially managed by our outreach staff and eventually transitioned to operation by the Fries Township staff. The Hillsville, VA market accredited their interest in opening a market directly to the success of the Independence Farmers Market and request technical assistance which was provided by our market manager staff.
  - vi. Market sales increased by **\$103,204** and increased by **54%** during the two year grant period as compared to the preceding two year period. This includes estimated sales at the Fries Farmers market.
  - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: **82** farmer/producers participated in one of more of the markets retail outlets.
    - a. Percent Increase: Prior to award, 45 producer farmers participated in the Market. An additional 34 joined during the grant period which represents an **82% increase in benefitting farmers.**
  
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? **Yes.**
  - i. Partnered with Virginia Department of Agriculture to provide mentorship and technical education to farmer producers to qualify as vendors to accept Senior Farmers Market Coupons. Currently four farmers are eligible to accept senior coupons. This initiative has brought a newfound respect to our market as a community benefactor and attracted many new customers who appreciate our community involvement. Continued our Double Dollar campaign which attracted **20 new SNAP** users who purchased an additional \$700 in fresh foods from the market. The Markets' positive image drew new vendors and customers. The success of the online market and the willingness of the On-line manager to pick-up product brought in new farmer/producers. The renting of office space has made the addition of a freezer and shelf space possible and has made online market participation easier for vendors and customers. Customers enjoy the new larger space with comfortable furniture that encourages visiting. The partnership with 4H exposed the Market to home school students and parents and resulted in new customers and producers to the online market. Inclusion of the local high-school culinary arts students to the online market, where the sell products made during class

has expanded our reach to local community through interested parents, teachers and school staff who make-up a better cross sectional representation of our traditionally low income work-force.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

i. Who are your community partners?

During the grant period we were joined by **22 community partners** at the Market.

- i. Grayson County High School Culinary Students – prepare local baked goods for sale at the Market and participate in contests
- ii. Virginia Department of Health – continues to assist us in getting local produced food in area convenience stores and offers free health check-ups at the Market and provides free cookbooks and shopping bags that attract low income residents
- iii. Blue Ridge Discovery Center –Partnered with the Market to host Farm to Table dinners during the Spring and Summer Mt. Rogers Naturalist rally . Annually participates in our Kids Day
- iv. Wholesome Wave – provided us with a grant to double SNAP benefits at the Market
- v. Appalachian Sustainable Development – offers regional branding a local food promotion through their Rooted in Appalachia campaign
- vi. Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) – offered technical assistance in the Farm Tour Project to promote agritourism in our area
- vii. Grayson Country Tourism director assisted with the publishing of new rack cards for wide distribution
- viii. The Town of Independence continues to allow us to use the Market location free of charge and has agreed to facilitate the creation of a Kid’s Corner garden
- ix. iSOFresh and Virginia Tech assisted with the consumer workshop
- x. Virginia Extension agents representing food safety and family nutrition education offer cooking demonstrations and bring seniors and low income residents to the Farmers Market
- xi. 2 local newspapers regularly act as judges for contests and offer free coverage for the Market
- xii. In Total Health, Twin County Regional Hospital, Twin County Prevention Coalition, Golden Living, Rooftop of Virginia, a local chiropractor and a massage therapist participate in our Wellness Day that offers free screenings and health education
- xiii. Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts use the Market to host fundraising projects
- xiv. The Blue Ridge Fiber Guild, Big Ridge Old time String Band, Park ranger Amelia, and an animal rescue group participate in our special Event Days.

ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?

- i. The addition of the Grayson HS students has increased our vendors and sales on the Online Market
- ii. The Health department has brokered partnership with two convenience stores that increased our farmers’ retail outlets. Partnerships with the VDH, hospital and other local health providers enable the Market to serve as a fun access point for health education and outreach to underserved populations.

- iii. The dinner during the rally reached a wide range of people from all over the South East and created another sales opportunity for producers.
      - iv. Appalachian Sustainable Development has provided marketing materials and assistance to vendors and the Market as a whole, administered the double dollars program for Wholesome Wave that increased Market attendance by SNAP users, and training for our manager including a network of other farmers market managers that provides new ideas and helps solve problems.
      - v. The distribution of the rack cards brought more tourists to the Market
      - vi. Consumer workshops and cooking demos hosted by various Virginia Tech extension agents help bring new customers to the Market and being accompanied by the family nutrition educator overcomes uncertainty about coming to the Market for the 1st time or using SNAP benefits
      - vii. Coverage of contests and other Market events brings tourists to the Market
      - viii. Wellness events offering free testing attract seniors and low income residents
      - ix. Scout groups attract more children to the Market
      - x. Our other community partners add interest and activities that appeal to children, tourists and the local community and boost our attendance.
    - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant? We will continue engage and rely on all our partners to build on our results to increase the health and productivity of our community.
5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project? N/A
6. Have you publicized any results yet?\*
- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? Project metrics have not been shared publically, but have been discussed during the Town of Independence Council meetings and at locally Farm Bureau meetings. Results and news of Market events such as pie contest, largest tomato, Chile cook-off, etc., are publicized in local papers, on face-book and radio. Posters are often affixed to store front windows and other merchants. See attached information. (Attachment A)
  - ii. To whom did you publicize the results? Town Council, farmer/producers, and community stakeholders upon request.
  - iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? The newspaper has a readership of over 5000. Listeners to our public radio addresses are estimated at over 10,000. Our Facebook page has 978 likes and 968 followers A record 1.8k viewed the Facebook post introducing LuLu Bakes,our new 10 year old vendor.
- \*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).
7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work? Yes
- i. If so, how did you collect the information? We survey our producers at our preseason and post season vendor meetings. In addition, ASD collected customer feedback during the two Rooted in Appalachia Roadshow events (see Attachment B).

- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? Producers and farmers reported steady to increasing sales. They claimed cooking demonstrations led to increased sales. Customers chose the day and hours of the Online Market pickup and expressed appreciation for the flexibility of multiple market days.

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? Yes
  - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? Pesticide free Christmas Trees were sold to raise funding for the Kids Day events. The trees raised awareness of the local farms, the market and generated \$3800 in income for the market and area tree farmers.

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). The addition of a designated On-line manager has facilitated the growth of that Market. The creation of the Kids Corner coordinator improved the quality and range of activities and brought more kids and young families to the Market. Workshops continue to be a positive tool for educating our producers and increasing their productivity and profitability. They also increase our exposure in the community and have resulted in backyard gardeners making the transition to market farmers. Consumer workshops and cooking demonstrations increase the consumption of healthy fresh food and the utilization of a wider range of local products.
- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: Though we exceeded our goals, we were unable to execute a Farm Tour project to promote agriculture. In most cases, farmers were unwilling to commit to the logistics, liability and time to conduct on-farm tours. In the future we will try to incentivize these activities to help offset farmer concerns. In lieu of farm tours, we expanded our Kids Day events, by offering farm like activities at the market, including petting zoos, milking days, rodeo, onsite raised bed plantings, and fruit and vegetable identification games.
- 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: Allow resourcing for a project administrator. Fortunately our project manager has advanced experience in project management and donates the effort involved in grant administration. If not for this volunteer time, allowances would be required to retain administrative resources to fulfill grant administration.

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.

- a. The Market has developed sustainability plans to ensure staff retention at or above previous employment to support the open air market, online market and Kids Day activities. Continued growth in the year around Online market should lead to greater farmer income stability. The Connector project has transitioned to a mainstay operation of a local township under the leadership of Extension and County officials, providing long-term sustainability to that endeavor.
  - b. The Market's success and role as a community center has resulted in the Town of Independence hiring an engineering firm to begin planning for a permanent multi-use structure for the open air Market. This is quite a departure from the town's previous stance that no public funds would be used to "build" a permanent structure. As such the new Town Market Park is expected to be the centerpiece for new town development including sidewalk and traffic flow improvements.
  - c. The success of Wellness Day and our partnership with local health providers has resulted in the addition of a health educator intern with our parent organization Grayson Landcare who has a booth at each market and assists with engaging SNAP users and seniors and providing simple health checkups.
- 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?
- a. Future activities will include promoting local food through the development of a food vending truck/business and Chef tasting events to include public participation.

# Independence Farmers Market

## SNAP & SENIOR



The SNAP MATCH PROGRAM offers up to a \$25 match for SNAP purchases to buy fresh fruits and vegetables. (We welcome EBT & SNAP)

How does it work?

Your SNAP Benefits  
\$10

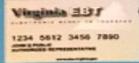
+

=

Match  
\$10

**\$20 in Tokens to Spend at the Market!**

You only spend \$10 of your SNAP benefits, but can spend \$20 at the Farmers Market! \$10 for anything you normally purchase with SNAP and \$10 for fruits and vegetables



SENIOR FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM helps eligible seniors get fresh, tasty, and nutritious locally-grown fruit, vegetables, and cut herbs.

Who is eligible?

You are 60 years of age or older, you are a resident of Grayson County, Virginia & you meet the program's income requirements.

Independence Farmers Market is open seasonally: Fridays from 9-1 and Wednesdays from 4-7

How does it work?

You must complete an application each year through your local Area Agency on Aging to determine if you are eligible to participate in the program. Participation is limited and applications are accepted on a first come-first served basis.

What is provided?

If your application is approved, you will receive \$40.00 worth of checks per eligible senior for that growing season. Each check is worth \$5.00 and may be used to purchase fresh, locally-grown fruit, vegetables, and cut herbs the market. Certified retail farmers market vendors will accept checks for fresh, locally grown fruit and vegetables in-season, depending on the produce items available.

For more information, contact Michelle Pridgen @ 276.768.0597

Forum

FROM FRONT... We made a lot of sour... Sanders took a moment to eulogize his... traveled to Toronto, the Bahamas, Myrtle

10 270-113-0566

# The Independence Farmers Market's Fall Finale!

Friday October 13th • 9am to 1pm • The Last Market of the Season



Free Community Apple Pressing  
Fresh Juice Available By Donation  
Kids Activities & Contests for All Ages

**Apple Dessert Contest**  
Bring your entry by 10:30am.  
Judging starts at 11am.  
Winner announced at 11:30am.  
Desserts will be cut  
and sold for the market.  
**1st prize \$100**  
Sponsored by the law office of  
Jonathan Venzie

**Great Pumpkin Contest**  
Must be grown by entrant.  
Weighing starts at 11am.  
The largest pumpkin wins!  
**1st prize \$100**  
Sponsored by  
Wagon Wheel Farm

### EMPTY BOWLS



STOP HUNGER

SOUP in a BOWL  
WATER & a ROLL  
a simple but powerful idea

Saturday, August 12th, 4:00pm to 6:30pm  
VFW Post 7726, 115 Klondike Road, Independence

Marshaling the arts to feed more than just the soul

This summer edition of Empty bowls features soups made by Chef Jen and the talented cooks of the IFM including chicken tortilla, minestrone and chilled gazpacho and fruit. Ingredients are locally raised and the soups will be made from scratch.

- Suggested minimum donation \$10 (cash or check only)
- Take-out available that evening at the VFW
- Benefiting Grayson County Backpack Ministries

For more information, please call The Arts Council at 276-238-1217 or visit [www.artsculturalcouncil.org](http://www.artsculturalcouncil.org)

EMPTY BOWLS partners include Chestnut Creek School of the Arts, The Independence Farmers Market, Carroll County Ministerial Association, Carroll County Schools, VFW Post 7726, First United Methodist Church of Hillsville, First Presbyterian Church of Galax and the many AMAZING Twin County Soup Makers & Bakers of Breads & Desserts.



### EMPTY BOWLS



STOP HUNGER

Marshaling the arts to feed more than just the soul

#### Our Sincerest Thanks The Foodies

- Jen Cavey - Wagon Wheel Farm
- Michelle Pridgen - Windy Hill Farm
- Sandra Venzie - One Potato Two Potato Farm
- Tom and Anita Simpson - Mountain House
- Maureen Madden - Mountain Meadows
- Steve Mabe and grandchildren, Charlotte Hanes - River Ridge
- Janie Christensen - Baywood Forest Organics
- Tina Cunningham - Bear Tree, Joyce Rouse-Earth Mama
- Corinne Greeson - Heritage Farm Organic
- Sylvia Martin - Martin's Wild Organic Artisan Bread
- Jonathan Hauser - Blue Feather Farm, Duchess Dairy
- Kathy Cole, Abby Nicolo, Scott Jackson Ricketts

#### The Potters

- Chestnut Creek School of the Arts & Old Town Pottery
- Carroll County High School Art Department
- Hannah Martin & HeartMoss Pottery

#### Our Very Special Thanks

- Chef Jen Cavey
- Dan Boyer & VFW Post 7726
- The Historic 1908 Courthouse Jammers
- Michelle Pridgen & The Independence Farmers Market
- The Arts Council of the Twin Counties Board of Directors

Attachment B  
 Independence Farmers Market Survey  
 Friday, May 27, 2016  
 9a-1p

	10 minute total
10a-10:10a	55
11a-11:10a	60
12p-12:10p	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>

Why do you shop at the market?	Activities/Events	Vendors	Atmosphere	Prices	Totals
	6	30	21	4	61
<b>Totals</b>	10%	49%	34%	7%	

How often do you visit this market?	1 x/ week	2x/ week	1x/month	2-3x/ month	Rarely	First Visit	Totals
	20	1	3	8	3	3	38
<b>Totals</b>	53%	3%	8%	21%	8%	8%	

How did you learn about this market?	Market website	Social Media	Radio/ TV	Newspaper	Flyer/Posters	Word of Mouth	Totals
	3	2	0	5	2	32	44
<b>Totals</b>	7%	5%	0%	11%	5%	73%	

How much do you plan to spend today?	\$0	\$1-10	\$11-20	\$21-30	\$31-49	\$50+	Totals
	1	6	15	9	5	4	40
<b>Totals</b>	3%	15%	38%	23%	13%	10%	

Comments:

- one couple stated they had a place in Fries and only get down 4-5 times per year and they always try to visit the market when in town
- One customer spent \$120 at the market
- Four people said they visit the market due to the quality of the food