

**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 – March 31, 2018
Authorized Representative Name:	Erika Jones
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Recipient Organization Name:	FairShare CSA Coalition, Inc.
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Expanding CSA Markets: Increasing Consumer Demand Through CSA Networks and Targeted Marketing
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15FMPPWI0086
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Madison, WI
Total Awarded Budget:	\$95,508.88

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: Professionally designed, implemented and analyzed CSA marketing survey

a. Progress Made:

FairShare partnered with Laura Witzling and Bret Shaw, researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison to design, implement and analyze a broad CSA consumer survey to help us better understand CSA consumer preferences. The survey aimed to reach three groups: Current CSA members, Former CSA members, and Never CSA members.

Using existing survey tool examples from California and a Wisconsin local food survey, FairShare also gathered input from FairShare’s staff, farmers, and local food systems partners in the development of the survey. The draft survey was tested among the University of Wisconsin-Extension Food Systems Team to ensure the accuracy of the survey design.

The survey was implemented in October 2016 – January 2017, based on the preference of farms to send the survey to members after the main growing season. Survey data was collected through a variety of contacts:

- FairShare farms and other CSA farms beyond FairShare from across the state received individual survey links to send to members, which allowed for tracking farm-specific data results.
- FairShare partner organizations, such as the Urban Ecology Center (Milwaukee), REAP (Madison), and Sustain Dane (Dane County) also shared a link to a general survey in order to reach consumers who might not be CSA members, but would be receptive to the model.
- The UW-River Falls Survey Center conducted a random email sample to reach additional consumers.
- A UW-Madison researcher, Anne Nardi, also distributed the survey online, using Facebook ads, to reach additional audiences. The goal of the ad campaign was two-fold:
 - Increase the number of responses to the survey, particularly for those who have never participated in CSA, and
 - Use the survey ads to test marketing messages and images by analyzing the number of responses, clicks and completed surveys in response to the ads.

Farmers attending FairShare’s annual meeting in December 2016 heard an initial partial report and analysis from the survey researchers, Laura Witzling and Bret Shaw. In June 2017, FairShare farms that had shared the survey link received individual-farm-based reports, and report data was presented via a webinar. These reports included data comparing the farm-specific responses to the aggregate data collected through the survey. Additionally, FairShare held a webinar for partner organizations, as well as other CSA support organizations to share our experience and key findings from conducting the survey. This webinar was held in July, 2017.

b. Impact on Community:

Ensuring farm participation in the distribution of the survey was critical to the success of this objective. During FairShare’s annual meeting in December 2015, and at the annual CSA Open House in March 2016, FairShare’s Executive Director spoke one-on-one with farmers to answer any questions and ensure full support.

A total of 3,227 individuals responded to the survey. The analysis focuses on 3,083 responses: 4% of respondents were removed because they were not sure if they had ever bought a CSA share, or did not answer that question. The survey respondents represent 3 groups: Current CSA members (64%), Former CSA members (15%) and Never CSA members (17%). FairShare shared an initial report with a small group of growers who are part of the Grower Program Committee. The growers indicated that they wanted survey results to direct the implementation of effective CSA communications campaigns geared toward consumers and partner organizations.

In December 2017, FairShare's Executive Director, and FairShare farmer and board member, Scott Laeser of Plowshares and Prairie Farm, presented the key findings from the survey at the Midwest CSA Conference. This presentation drew more than 50 CSA farms from across the region, and highlighted how the farmer can use this data to make marketing, communications, and even production or packaging decisions. Farmers who received their individual farm data walked away with clear steps on how to take action based on the results from their survey. Some of the key findings included:

- Food waste was a top reason members stopped CSA
- 88% of members say they eat healthier because of CSA
- Offering flexibility in share offerings is very attractive to new members

Links:

- [CSA Survey Tool](#)
- [Non-Specific Farm Survey Report](#)
- [Health Brief](#)
- [Consumer Brief](#)
- [Farmer Brief](#)
- [Full Survey Report](#)

ii. Goal/Objective 2: New FairShare CSA Coalition marketing plan based on survey data

a. Progress Made:

In 2016, FairShare established a Marketing and Promotions Committee (comprised of farmer and board members). This committee, renamed the Communications Committee in 2018, has devised an annual plan to increase CSA share sales using the data gathered from the CSA consumer survey. This plan is ongoing, with key components including:

- Farmer training, such as the Social Media Marketing skills training held 2/15/18
 - Training includes data from the CSA consumer survey on how to target receptive audiences based on interest, income, region, and other demographics
- Key messaging focused on connecting CSA to health, based on data from the survey
- Prioritizing CSA share sales as the desired outcome of outreach and marketing events

b. Impact on Community:

In 2017, FairShare began creating templates to help farmers easily “plug and play” their marketing materials. A template postcard accompanied by instructions for conducting a direct mail campaign was shared with farmers. Only one farm used the template in 2017, but in 2018, additional farms have implemented direct mail using the postcard and instructions. The farm who utilized the direct mail guide in 2017 indicated that she sold more than 8 shares as a result of the template.

In addition, during the spring of 2018, students from the University of Wisconsin-Madison worked on a capstone project to develop 4 marketing campaigns addressing CSA marketing challenges identified

through the survey. Students used survey, and additional marketing and consumer trend data, along with marketing research, to develop comprehensive campaigns. These campaigns were presented to FairShare in May. FairShare is working with its Communications committee and staff to incorporate tools and messages from these campaigns into our targeted marketing strategy.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Four nationally distributed CSA toolkits

a. Progress Made:

As a direct result of this project, FairShare, with support and input from project partners, has created 4 CSA Resource Toolkits covering several of its popular organization initiatives. The purpose of the toolkits is to provide CSA networks, farmer groups, and workplace CSA businesses with the framework for several of FairShare's signature programs, so that they may jump-start similar initiatives in their respective regions. Through this work, FairShare continues to support the regional and national growth of the CSA market.

The following [resource toolkits are available for download on FairShare's website](#):

1. CSA Incentives Toolkit
2. Food Access Toolkit
3. Promotions & Fundraising Toolkit
4. Workplace CSA Toolkit (Introduction)
 - o Chapter 1: For CSA Networks
 - o Chapter 2: For Farmers
 - o Chapter 3: For Businesses

Based on partner feedback, FairShare combined the Promotions and Fundraising toolkits, and also added a Food Access Toolkit to address the most pressing needs and interests of emerging CSA networks in expanding access to CSA for low-income households. FairShare held individual webinars introducing partners and the general public to these toolkits.

FairShare's staff and board members have presented portions of the toolkits, including CSA Incentives, FairShare promotions and fundraising work, CSA Collaborative Marketing, FairShare's primary food access program, and Workplace CSA at numerous conferences including:

- Midwest CSA Conference, December 3-4, 2015
- Northern Michigan Small Farms Conference and the Farms, Food and Health Conference, January 29-30, 2016
- WI Healthy Hospitals and Clinics Forum, September 30, 2016
- Soil & Nutrition Conference, December 4-6, 2016
- Food & Healthcare Intersections Summit, January 30, 2017
- Midwest CSA Conference, December 7-8, 2017

b. Impact on Community:

These resources will continue to impact the greater, national CSA movement by strengthening CSA network and farmer programs and initiatives, but so far, project partners have shared successes and initiatives based on these shared best practices.

- CAFF has expanded access to CSA through EBT and has shared CSA consumer survey data with farms. In addition, Michelle Wyler, from CAFF shared, *"These toolkits provide great examples from FairShare, plus I found the examples/experiences from other organizations really helped to broaden the scope. I will steer farmers and organizations that I encounter to these helpful resources. CAFF will*

look more closely at the fundraising toolkit to generate new ideas for our organization. It's nice to have resources outside of CAFF."

- West Michigan Growers Group, and the Statewide CSA Working Group have begun assessing the CSA market across their state, and initiated partnerships with workplaces.
- Glynwood has facilitated the Hudson Valley CSA Coalition, and created a shared website platform for the 80+ CSA farms in the region. They are exploring programming to expand access to CSA using the best practices shared by FairShare through partner calls and in-depth consultations.
- The Duluth CSA Guild has expanded their workplace outreach using the tools provided by FairShare and shared best practices from project partners. Landis Spickerman, from Hermit Creek Farm shared, *"Excellent and very specific tools. Highly useful and logically presented with work flows outlined very well. We found the Tool Shed supporting materials an excellent concept and easy to find and access materials. We have found value in being part of a network of networks in the CSA community. It helped to put into context our struggles and accomplishments and we look forward to keeping our connections."*
- The Groundwork Center in Northern Michigan held the Farms, Food & Health Conference. Due to FairShare's presentation and shared best practices, they are moving toward a healthcare and workplace-based CSA incentive program.
- Bluegrass Harvest, a project in partnership with the University of Kentucky, has implemented an employer-based incentive program. Farmers from Kentucky visited FairShare in March to participate in a learning exchange to further inform their coalition-wide efforts.

iv. Goal/Objective 4: FairShare is equipped to support emerging CSA organizations

a. Progress Made:

FairShare has created and shared the 4 CSA resource toolkits through our website and through webinars that were broadly publicized. These resources will provide one place for us to direct a majority of inquiries from budding CSA networks, as well as a foundation for building additional, even more comprehensive programming. These tools formalize FairShare's signature programs and introduce some additional resources, but a more comprehensive scan of available resources would help to further collect and formalize the national best practices for CSAs around the country.

b. Impact on Community:

FairShare has shared these tools with partners and other emerging CSA organizations, thereby providing comprehensive insights into our work, and ensuring that we can clearly communicate how our organization has built a successful CSA coalition.

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: N/A
- ii. Number of jobs retained: N/A
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: N/A
- iv. Number of markets expanded: *5 regions*
 - a. **Duluth CSA Guild**, with 16 farms serving the Duluth, MN and Superior, WI regions has implemented a number of programs to attract and retain CSA members. Their CSA Guild Open House, Prescription for Wellness, and CSA farmer network has helped to increase awareness of CSA in the region. The Guild's participations in this project allowed early access to the toolkits and discussions "behind the scenes" with other CSA coalitions has increased their network's

knowledge and skills. Overall, the Guild's member farms have slowly become more professional in their marketing of the CSA concept.

- b. **West Michigan Growers Group**, is comprised of 20 direct-market and CSA farms serving Grand Rapids, MI. The group has become a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization over the course of this project. The Growers Group has held CSA Grower's Fairs and contributed content to the toolkits developed through this project. In addition, a Statewide CSA Working Group was established. The sharing of FairShare's Consumer Survey tools enabled the Michigan Statewide CSA Working Group to launch their own survey to assess the state of CSA across Michigan.
- c. **Hudson Valley CSA Coalition**, serving more than 80 CSA farms in the Hudson Valley, NY region. This group is facilitated by the nonprofit, Glynwood, and has established a website (starting in 2018). This group has been inspired by FairShare and the collective work through this project to expand its collective marketing efforts. In addition, the Hudson Valley CSA Coalition is developing programs to expand access and affordability to CSA for the farms in their region. This effort has been aided by consultation with FairShare and the other partners in this project, and the Food Access Toolkit created through this project.
- d. **CAFF**, serves over 250 CSA farms across California. CAFF has implemented a number of initiatives throughout the course of this project including EBT access, worksite CSA, joint CSA promotions, Farmer to Farmer exchanges to share lessons learned and best practices, and disseminated data from CSA consumer surveys. Their efforts to equip farms with EBT has increased the sales of five CSA farms in Northern CA by \$8,000 in total (combined figure) annually.
- e. **FairShare CSA Coalition** consists of 50 farms serving Wisconsin, Dubuque, IA, the Twin Cities, MN and parts of Illinois. Through the course of this project, FairShare's affiliated farms increased the number of CSA shares sold by over 1,000 shares. Farms in the Coalition each received an individual report including their own data from a statewide CSA consumer survey, enabling farms to refine and prioritize marketing efforts.
- v. Number of new markets established: N/A
- vi. Market sales increased by \$insert dollars and increased by insert percentage%. : N/A
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:
416 farms from the partnering organizations have benefited from this project. Additional farms and organizations have received information about FairShare's programs, tools, and survey data. Additional information about audience reach will be tracked through the download of the toolkits, page and webinar views. Toolkits are which are now [available on the FairShare CSA Coalition website](#).
- a. Percent Increase: This number exceeds the original projected number of farms that would benefit (227) by greater than 180%.

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?

Through FairShare's work on these toolkits, and the sharing of best practices with partners, FairShare has been able to formalize its Partner Shares program and launch a partnership with Dane County (the county in which the FairShare office resides) that is providing funding to support targeted outreach to and subsidies for limited income households as identified through the ERS Food Access Research Atlas.

FairShare's streamlined Workplace CSA toolkit has enabled the organization to quickly respond to requests for information from potential Workplace CSA sites, as well as requests from other organizations around the country.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners?
- ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?

Formal project partners throughout this project have included:

- University of Wisconsin-Madison researchers Laura Witzling and Bret Shaw:
 - Drafted the survey tool, solicited input, shared and distributed the survey, compiled survey data, provided analysis, compiled a full report and survey briefs.
- FairShare's 50+ CSA farms:
 - Contributed feedback on survey tool, distributed surveys to members, and participated in marketing trainings and presentations about the survey project.
- Duluth CSA Guild:
 - Provided input on the structure and form of toolkits
 - Contributed content to the toolkits
 - Implemented tools and resources provided through the project
- West Michigan Growers Group:
 - Provided input on the structure and form of toolkits
 - Contributed content to the toolkits
 - Implemented tools and resources provided through the project
- Glynwood/Hudson Valley CSA Coalition:
 - Provided input on the structure and form of toolkits
 - Contributed content to the toolkits
 - Implemented tools and resources provided through the project
- CAFF:
 - Provided input on the structure and form of toolkits
 - Contributed content to the toolkits
 - Implemented tools and resources provided through the project

Additional project partners and collaborators have emerged through this project including:

- Small Farm Central – Disseminated webinar and toolkit resources to a large CSA farmer contact list.
- Wisconsin Farmers Union – Assisted with disseminating survey and marketing data.
- NOFA-NY – Participated in numerous webinars and calls regarding shared CSA best practices and data.
- MSU-Extension – Serves as an advisor for the West Michigan Growers Group and is facilitating a statewide CSA Working Group, shared data, and participated in numerous webinars, and calls.
- University of KY and Bluegrass Harvest – Have shared data, research, and best practices around employer and health-based incentives, and contributed resources and content found in the toolkits.

- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?

Because of this project, all partners are more aware of and connected with other CSA coalitions or networks. These organizations have begun to build relationships and connections with one another and now have a foundation for sharing resources and ideas. The toolkits provide resources from around the country, making it easier for farms and organizations to reach out to the right person or organization with any clarifying questions they may have.

We anticipate additional feedback on each of the toolkits as the networks begin to use them more actively and have asked partners and anyone who uses them to share their thoughts or stories.

FairShare farms will continue to contribute to FairShare's marketing and communications plans as part of the Communications Committee.

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

FairShare has a small staff, therefore we utilized support from a graphics designer, survey researchers and support from partner CSA groups and a content editor to complete the work on the toolkits.

- The graphic design consultant has created a format template for the toolkits and inputted the final drafts into the template, ensuring a cohesive and consistent look and feel to all the toolkits.
- The survey researchers conducted a professional survey ensuring IRB approval for the research, as well as a well-designed survey tool. They also ensured the survey was broadly disseminated and provided results analysis, reports and briefs ensuring the key findings are easily communicable.
- Erika Jensen, a former FairShare farmer and content editor, organized and edited draft materials for the toolkits and provided coordination for the final products to ensure the tools were structured consistently and comprehensive.
- Point Data Consulting contributed content to the CSA Promotions & Fundraising Toolkit and tested CSA consumer survey messages via online ads, ensuring targeted messages are effective

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results?
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).

The final toolkits and survey report have not yet been publicized and are in final review by the Communications Committee and FairShare Board. They will be shared via a press release as well as a broad email message shared via Small Farm Central (reaching at least 6,000 contacts). The press release with links to the survey reports and four toolkits will also be shared with all the CSA networks who are part of this project, as well as via Wisconsin Farmers Union, the University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture Life Sciences Communication, the University of Wisconsin-Extension Food Systems Team, and the FairShare Farm Google group (over 300 farmers).

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?

We have collected feedback from stakeholders on our plans and work throughout the course of the project. Feedback and buy-in from farmers, grant partners, and board members has influenced the survey rollout timeline and contents of the survey and subsequent reports we are generating. In addition, partners have provided input on the toolkit format and contents.

- i. If so, how did you collect the information?
 - We have utilized Google Forms to solicit feedback from our partners and farms.
 - In person meetings among FairShare and other CSA and direct-market farms at the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services (MOSES) Organic Farming Conference, the FairShare Annual Meeting, the Midwest CSA Conference and the Organic Vegetable Production Conference also provided opportunities for feedback.
 - We solicited feedback from FairShare's 2 farmer-based committees, the Grower Education and Endorsement Committees.

- Conference call meetings and one-on-one phone calls with project partners have been an invaluable tool for sharing ideas and feedback on projects and resources.

ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

Partners have commented on specific toolkit tools and resources, how they anticipate using the toolkits, and what additional information they think would be useful. The primary comment heard from partners was that they think the toolkit content will be very useful, but they see challenges in implementing a Workplace CSA program without having a network coordinator to spearhead the work. The Duluth CSA Guild shared, *“We will use the Workplace toolkit. It is very thorough in its plan and implementation concepts.”*

Farms had many concerns about allowing an “outside” organization to survey their members, primarily due to the diversity of opinions inherent in working with a large number of farms. In particular, questions about attitudes, concerns, and consumer choice were troubling for farmers. They didn’t want to change consumer behaviors related to their CSA membership. Our survey consultant assured farmers behavioral change research indicates it is unlikely that simply reading about options in a survey would have a lasting effect on consumer behavior.

We also received positive feedback from farms that were eager to have data to drive future promotions. This type of survey was uncharted territory for our farms, and there is a great deal of excitement about the potential.

Farms are most interested in seeing the survey results used to promote CSA broadly and translated into tools that they can use to target specific groups of consumers. Other CSA networks and partners have been particularly interested in the survey tool and implementation plan. We received calls from the Chicagoland CSA network (Band of Farmers), Routes to Farm (also Chicagoland), and the Urban Ecology Center (Milwaukee) about implementing a similar survey, and about the results and findings of our survey.

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).

Meeting on a regular basis with project partners was invaluable. We learned that having a regularly scheduled call and phone number to call into would have been even more valuable and will do this in the future. Scheduling a call at the same day and time each quarter, and ensuring that folks know either the topic or the standing agenda would have also helped us form a more cohesive group of partners more quickly.

Introductions and updates about initiatives that were shared during partner calls were extremely valued. The partners became a sounding board for ideas and sharing of suggestions or resources on

specific challenges and topics. Michelle Wyler from CAFF stated, *“The most beneficial component of this project has been the ability to gather with peers in the field to learn from one another and to improve our ability to serve the farmers with whom we're working. I'd love to see a Community of Practice continue!!”*

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

As a small organization that was new to administering such a large grant, there was a steep learning curve to ensuring all work was accounted for. Allocating additional time for administration and ensuring that there is a more streamlined tracking mechanism in place for the project would have improved the transition of the project work to the new staff person. As it turned out, the Executive Director ended up contributing much more time to the project as the main person with the knowledge and background, and the Program Manager contributed to a lesser degree.

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.
- 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?

This project has begun to coalesce a nation-wide CSA Community of Practice. FairShare has been seen as a leader in this effort. Through our connections with these project partners, and others, we are working to expand this community and further formalize a national network of CSAs and CSA support organizations. There is much to learn and through partnering we are reducing redundancies, increasing efficiencies in responding to emerging issues, equipping CSA farmers with up-to-date information and data and resources, and communicating a more cohesive message about CSA to a wider audience.

Through further shoring up the capacity of a national community of practice, CSA farms will be equipped with the tools and resources to reach their ideal customer, target specific businesses or community partners, and increase their new membership as well as retain their existing customers with innovations to the CSA model. In addition, these shared resources and connections will contribute to FairShare's effectiveness disseminating timely information, resources and best-practices to CSA growers in our region that will lead to improved marketing, CSA member retention, and ultimately growth among the CSA farms.

Future activities that will build on this project are to create an ongoing Community of Practice that meets regularly to share data and develop tools and training to support CSA growers and technical assistance providers across the United States.