

**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>	October 1, 2014- March 25, 2017
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	John Whitson
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<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	City of Texarkana, Texas
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Texarkana Farm to Table Initiative: Expanding Local Producer to Consumer Opportunities in Low Income Neighborhoods
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPPX-TX-0157
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Texarkana, Texas
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$93,746

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).

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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:

1. Expansion of a young and growing farmers' market through producer to consumer marketing and promotion activities targeting low income communities.

- a. Increased use of food assistance programs SNAP and WIC

- b. Increased advertising in historically low-income communities utilizing marketing and outreach through minority oriented publications such as Texarkana Community Journal and Amigo News. Additionally, we plan to utilize social media, mobile alerts and traditional neighborhood flyers to help disseminate information throughout the community. The market expansion will involve supportive partners including the Texarkana, Texas Farmers' Market, Flour Child Fine Foods, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office and the Texarkana Bowie County Health Clinic.

- a. Progress Made: Substantial progress was made on all fronts of objective one.

- The Market grew considerably through the project, began accepting snap/ebt payments, and while use of the program has not been overwhelming, customers who do use it are always relieved to have it available. This capability was a big part of our outreach to low income neighborhoods. Outreach to these neighborhoods included the use of several types of media from flyers to radio, to TV, to social media, the Market had great luck in increasing the community's awareness of Market events and programs through targeted advertising. The utilization of community partnerships also allowed the Market to reach populations previously unreached, and hold events previously unavailable at the Market.

- b. Impact on Community: The Market grew considerable, and as such could better serve the community. Additionally, the market's presence in low income communities through the mobile Market and community gardens helped alleviate local urban food deserts and supplement fresh vegetables into the targeted areas. In general, awareness of the Market in all communities was increased, and access to Market produce was brought, bought, and distributed to areas that in the past had not been able to.

- ii. Goal/Objective 2:

- Development of a new mobile farmers market, launching seven additional market locations in partnership with the Texarkana, Texas Housing Authority to extend locally grown produce access into identified neighborhood food deserts, establishing community gardens for resident use and to increase urban farmer capacity. The program will involve supportive partners including the Texarkana, Texas Farmers' Market, Flour Child Fine Foods, Boys & Girls Club of Texarkana, Home Depot, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office and the Texarkana Bowie County Health Clinic.

- a. Progress Made: The creation of the Mobile Market and community gardens was a remarkable success for this project and a wonderful benefit for the community. The Mobile Market made 8 deliveries to the housing authority and five community gardens were created. Both the community gardens and the mobile market are poised to expand and grow alongside the Market for years to come. Both objectives involved partnering with community organizations.

b. Impact on Community: Fresh local produce was delivered to the Housing Authority as a means of providing HATT residents access to fruits and vegetables that would otherwise be unavailable. Additionally, the community gardens were utilized as a means of self-supplementing dietary produce in several neighborhoods identified as urban food deserts. Many community organizations rallied around the creation of these gardens providing volunteers for the construction, and programming at the gardens afterwards as a way of further integrating them into the community. Additionally, many hours were put into the upkeep and maintenance of the gardens by residents.

iii. Goal/Objective 3:

Expansion of a farm to table training program that includes farmer/vendor led workshops related to urban farmer entrepreneurial skills, food preparation, value added processing, marketing and sales, healthy nutrition cooking series, direct marketing to local culinary arts programs and technical assistance. The program expansion will involve supportive partners including Flour Child Fine Foods, Boys & Girls Club of Texarkana, Home Depot, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office and the Texarkana Bowie County Health Clinic.

a. Progress Made: This objective may have been the most difficult part of the project. While several cooking demonstrations and education workshops were held in conjunction to the Market, there was little attendance that would reflect the greater goals of this objective. Moving forward, a heavier emphasis on the educational side of the Market will be pursued, but it will take additional time and resources to expand the program beyond passive attendance. In short, while workshops and presentations were held and attended, a greater impact would have been desired.

b. Impact on Community: Awareness of educational opportunities was increased, and select individuals gained knowledge and skills related to Market participation and dietary needs, but time will tell if any lasting impacts are made from this objective.

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. One direct Job was created with the hiring of a Farmers' Market Manager.
- ii. Number of jobs retained: N/A
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: N/A
  - i. Number of markets expanded: 1. The Texarkana, Texas Farmers' Market was expanded in the number of events, vendors, and customers. Events have increased from 12 to 19, to 24 for the current year. Vendors have increased from 7 consistently to 17 consistently (with more than 30 vendors attending at least one event), and customers have increased with enough volume to support the additional vendors and is still growing.
- iv. Number of new markets established: 1 Mobile Market
- v. Market sales increased by \$insert dollars and increased by insert percentage%. N/A (No formal data was collected for this metric, but would be in line with vendor growth.)

- vi. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 30  
Farmers/Producers benefited from the project  
a. Percent Increase: 428%

- 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 Farmers' Market did expand into new markets with the creation of the mobile market. With this Market, we could provide fresh fruits and vegetables from the Market to residents of a low-income housing development operated by the Housing Authority of Texarkana, Texas. Additionally, the Market became a bus stop for the local transit authority, allowing people reliant on public transportation an option for accessing the Market.

- 4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners?

The Texarkana, Farmers' Market's community partners included the Bowie County Agriculture Extension Office, the Bowie County Master Gardeners, the Bowie County Health Department, the Housing Authority of Texarkana, Texas, Texarkana Independent School District, Randy Sam's Homeless Shelter, the Salvation Army, and the Beverly Neighborhood Association.

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

The community partners contributed greatly to the success of the FMPP grant. The extension office provided training and education related to the market as well as helped in outreach, providing local farmers information on how to participate in the Market, as well as participating in the Market directly by setting up several expo table highlighting interesting test crops being grown by extension office projects. The Master Gardeners participated and helped in a similar fashion by attending events and providing answers to market participants on agricultural and botanical subjects. The Bowie County Health Dept. Helped to host several cooking demonstrations highlighting the use of Market produce in everyday meals. The Health Dept. also helped to advertise the Market towards ebt recipients, informing them of the availability of produce at the market and their ability to use ebt funds. Finally, the HATT was instrumental in the execution of the Mobile Market. The provided a location for pickup and delivery of Market goods, helped in the collection of Market orders, and advertised to their residents fervently. They also worked closely with the Market to ensure that the Market was adapting the mobile market to best serve those who it was targeting. In addition to this, HATT also created a community garden in line with project objectives. The Salvation Army, Beverly Neighborhood Association, TISD, and Randy Sam's also created community gardens. Randy Sam's has also become one of the Market's favorite vendors, as their in-house bakery now participates regularly.

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

Each of the community partners will continue to play a role in the Market as it continues to move forward. Whether that is through the creation of more community gardens, the expansion of the mobile market, or continued education and cooking demonstrations, the Market is sure to benefit from the strong ties to the community that have been built over the last 2.5 years.

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

No.

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

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

In May 2016, the Texarkana, Texas Farmers' Market gave a presentation at the Neighborhoods USA (NUSA) National Conference where information on the project up to that point was shared. No official publications or summaries of the project have been given or distributed since that time, but plans are in the works for such a publication.

- ii. To whom did you publicize the results?

NUSA conference attendees.

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

25

\*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?

No formal feedback from the project has been collected as of this time, but informal feedback gathered points to a very positive reception from the community and an increase in support of the Market.

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

N/A

- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

N/A

#### 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?

N/A

#### 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).

Over the past 2.5 years, the Market has grown and blossomed as it established itself as a premier source for local produce, open and accepting of everyone. Many lessons have been learned, but perhaps the most vital lesson learned is that it is the interpersonal relationships build in and around the Farmers' Market that keeps both vendors and customers coming back. We have learned that any new endeavor the Farmers' Market wants to pursue must have the support of the vendors as well as community partners to be successful. And to maximize the impact the project has; advertising and communication is an absolute must. Whether it's by flyer, radio, social media, TV, or other means, you must get the word out about your program if it is going to succeed. Another lesson learned is that the vendor, customer relationship is cyclical with more vendors drawing more customers and more customers supporting more vendors. Excitement is contagious and creating an inviting and exciting atmosphere at the market contributes heavily to the success of Market events. Standalone educational classes do not fair nearly as well as classes and presentations built into existing Market events. Another great take away from the

project is that for community gardens to be successful, the community must support them. If at least one or two people in the area take a real interest in the garden it does much better than a garden built, advertised and then just left to itself.

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

The one goal that was not met was the creation of seven separate Mobile Market locations. Instead all Mobile Market deliveries went to a single centralized location. This was also the single point for placing orders. While individual order and drop of locations would have been ideal, the logistics and man power that would have been necessary to carryout would have been un realistic and overly cumbersome. By streamlining the process, it also made coordination between the Market and community partners much easier. However, if multiple mobile markets are a necessity, an online ordering and payment system would be essential. This would take out much of the leg work required to manage 7 mobile markets and coordinate delivery times and locations.

In addition, the Market team was not fully satisfied with the educational objectives outline in goal #3. For this goal to have been better met, one of two solutions would need to be implemented. 1: create a yearlong season consisting of active market and educational market seasons. Active market seasons would be devoted to the sale of produce and cooking demonstrations. The educational season would be devoted to vendor growth, retention and development. While this would be a wonderful model in some situations, we found that in the "off-season" vendors were either "tired" from the long active season and wanted a break away from the market, or it was simply difficult to find community participants who were interested in the market during this slow period. Solution #2 would involve better integrating the educational series into existing events. While this works well for somethings like cooking demonstrations and passive educational booths, we found it difficult to maintain an audience at the market for 15 or more minutes for a discussion on a topic like soil-composition. While an ideal solution probably lies somewhere in the middle of these two suggestions, it would also be helpful to relegate much of the educational activities to groups like the master gardeners and extension offices that specialize in these matters.

- 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:

Organizational capacity and community partnerships are a necessity to the success of the FMPP grant program. While any one project or objective may be achievable on its own without much organizational stress, to make any sort of real change in the community will take time, discipline, and a large group of community supporters to call on and utilize. Take community gardens for example. The five that were built each only took a day to erect, but that required finding volunteers and sponsors to build and then community members to maintain. Each garden required a separate set of community volunteers to erect and a separate set of community members to maintain.

For this project, the breadth of objectives being tackled was far and away from anything the City of Texarkana, Texas could have achieved on its own and required expertise from outside the organization to execute. These partnerships, built through the project will undoubtedly be some of the best takeaways coming out of the grant.

#### 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.

The objectives of this FMPP Grant will be continued with the Market as we continue to try to expand the service area of the Market. We look to expand the Mobile Market program using assets and relationships formed over the grant period. We will continue to utilize a variety of medias to communicate Market activities to the community, keeping participants in the know and reaching out to groups that would not otherwise participate in the Market. Efforts to expand the educational side of the market will continue with emphasis on trainings that will help new vendors the most. Additionally, the community gardens will continue to be supported and expanded.

- 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?

Future activities will include creating Market programing designed to attract and serve minority ethnic groups by hosting cultural celebrations. Additional growth will be sought in partnerships with local schools and restaurants.