

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)
Final Performance Report**

Report Date Range:	September 30, 2014-September 29, 2016
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Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Building the Federal Nutrition Benefit Client Customer Base at Illinois Farmers Markets
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPPX-IL-0059 IL-206
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Chicago, Illinois
Total Awarded Budget:	\$99,939

FMPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

X Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

1. Goals/Objectives of Project

Goal/Objective 1:

To enable the 61st Street Farmers Market to extend its market season from eight to twelve months and become the only year-round farmers market on Chicago’s South Side, thereby ensuring ongoing access to fresh and healthy foods for our low-income community (Census Tract #17031420200) and a year-round venue for regional agricultural producers to sell their products.

Goal 1 Progress Made

- 1) Expanded the 61st Street Farmers Market to operate year-round (35 markets per year), weekly May-December and monthly January-April.
- 2) Offered the opportunity for 35 farmers and food producers to sell their products to an average of 1,100 customers weekly from May through October and 375 customers weekly from November – December, and monthly from January thru April. With 24 vendors selling at the 2016 indoor market, we increased our vendor base by 5 over 2014-15, and maximized the use of our space every market day.
- 3) Provided SNAP acceptance and a Double Value Coupon Program at the 61st Street Farmers Market, serving 389 (2015) and 386 (2016) unique SNAP customers, with an average of 30 SNAP customers each week.

Goal 1 Impact on the Community

- 1) In 2015, 71% of shoppers surveyed at the 61st Street Farmers Market in October 2015 reported eating more fruits and vegetables due to the Market (2016 data not yet available).

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2) In 2015, 92.2% of Market shoppers reported coming to the Market to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables.

Goal/Objective 2:

To build the clientele base and increase the economic viability of the 61st Street Farmers Market through expanded year-round promotional outreach and education in the local community and healthy eating incentive programming.

Goal 2 Progress Made

- 1) Designed and created culturally appropriate banners and flyers for the 61st Street Farmers Market 2015 and 2016 outdoor and indoor seasons. Flyers were distributed throughout the community on an ongoing basis. Banners were hung in prominent places, both near the Market location and in the surrounding neighborhood.
- 2) Promoted the Market by distributing flyers and approximately 50 servings of fresh Market fruit per week to 50-70 SNAP clients through weekly visits to the local DHS office (35 visits per year).
- 3) Promoted the Market through outreach visits each year to 8-10 community and University of Chicago health fairs, community events, alderman's office, the local YMCA.
- 4) Promoted the Market and healthy eating through social media (website, email blasts, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter), and weekly newsprint ads in the South Side Weekly newspaper.
- 5) In partnership with Carnegie Elementary School, carried out 8 weeks of spring and 4 weeks of fall in-school gardening classes for 3rd graders, a 4-week healthy eating course for 2nd graders, and 2 series (3 classes each) of free after-school cooking classes to Carnegie fourth graders. Gardening classes taught students what is needed for plants to grow, which food crops grow in Illinois, how to identify fruits and vegetables, their seeds and leaves, how to plant seeds and transplant seedlings, how to identify weeds and pests, how to manage pests organically, how to harvest the fruits and vegetables they planted and tended. Cooking classes taught students knife and sanitation skills and how to prepare a variety of dishes using Illinois Specialty Crops and vegetables grown by the gardening classes. In 2016 alone, 194 Carnegie School students learned what it means to eat healthfully and to grow, prepare and enjoy fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods.
- 6) In partnership with Experimental Station's Blackstone Bicycle Works program, carried out 8 weeks of summer gardening instruction for 17 youths, ages 8-18.
- 7) In partnership with Jackson Park Terrace low-income apartments, provided community garden plots and gardening instruction to 24 Jackson Park Terrace residents from April to November 2016.
- 8) Organized and coordinated weekly at-market Market School activities and chef demonstrations.
- 9) Provided weekly at-market health screenings and information about which foods sold at the farmers market are beneficial for lowering blood pressure.

Goal 2 Impact on the Community

- 1) Recorded \$21,147 in SNAP, \$19,600 in Double Value Coupons, \$28,640 in Credit/Debit, \$10,160 in Market Money, \$2,842 in Eat Up! Health Bucks, and \$352 in Food Rx Coupon sales at the 61st Street Farmers Market in 2016, totaling \$82,741. This compares to a total of \$78,823 in 2015 and \$65,902 in 2014.
- 2) In 2015, 199 and, in 2016, 235 Carnegie School children and Jackson Park Terrace residents benefited from the 61st Street Farmers Market's educational programming.

3) 70.7% of 460 Market customers surveyed in October 2015 reported learning more about sustainably grown organic or local food; 41% reported learning more about food preparation; 52% reported learning more about nutrition and healthy eating; 71.2% reported eating more fruits and vegetables as a result of shopping at the Market. 2016 survey data will be available in January 2017.

4) From surveys taken upon completion of the gardening program in 2016, 100% of students reported learning something new about how fruit and vegetables grow, while 97.5% reported wanting to eat more fruits and vegetables after learning about them (among those listed, often repeatedly: apples, strawberries, popcorn, “apercots”, tomatoes, kale, purple kale, sorrel, carrots, radishes, pumpkin seeds, sweet peppers, chard).

Goal/Objective 3:

To create nutrition incentives at farmers markets, in conjunction with EBT expansion, has proved to be a highly effective means of incentivizing SNAP customers to purchase and consume agricultural products sold at farmers markets and has resulted in 10-25% increases in farmers revenues at our community-supported 61st Street Farmers Market since 2009. This project aims to expand the use of a new Community Health Market model, piloted at the 61st Street Farmers Market in 2014, intended to help secure long-term sources of matching funds in Illinois and beyond for the federal Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program (FINI).

Goal 3 Progress Made

1) In partnership with Harmony WellCare (Illinois’ largest state-contracted Medicaid provider), over the granting period, Experimental Station expanded the Community Health Market model and *Eat Up!* program to 10 farmers markets in Chicago and one market in East St. Louis, Illinois, operated by the East St. Louis Department of Health.

2) The 61st Street Farmers Market offered *Eat Up!* throughout the reporting period, weekly during the months of May through December and once per month at the monthly January through April markets (total 35 times per year).

Goal 3 Impact on the Community

1) From 2014-2016, *Eat Up!* grew in popularity among SNAP shoppers. Hiring staff to carry out the program at 6 markets in 2015 and 11 markets in 2016, Experimental Station was able to ensure that health data was taken consistently and correctly, and that SNAP customers were provided accurate information about their health. SNAP customers were rewarded at each visit with a \$5 voucher to spend on fruits and vegetables at the farmers market. At Chicago’s Division Street market, as many as 200 SNAP customers visited the *Eat Up!* tent in a single day. Over \$24,000 in *Eat Up!* vouchers were distributed to SNAP customers in 2016 alone.

Eat Up! 2014-2016	2016 YTD (thru 11/12/16)	2015	2014	total
# Unique Eat Up SNAP Shoppers:	1177	233	150	n/a
# Eat Up Tent Visits:	4806	688	294	5788

2) The Experimental Station raised \$177,000 in 2015, which funded LINK Up Illinois Double Value Coupon incentive programs at 55 Illinois markets and market sites. LINK Up Illinois partner markets generated \$124,335 in SNAP sales and \$127,517 in DVCP sales (total \$251,852 SNAP/DVCP sales from 8,258 SNAP transactions). In 2016, Experimental Station raised \$315,000 for Double Value Coupon incentives (partially funded with USDA FINI funds), which supported LINK Up Illinois Double Value Coupon incentive programs at 72 Illinois markets and market sites, generating more than \$160,854 in SNAP sales and \$142,783 in DVCP sales from 9,235 SNAP transactions (some markets have not yet reported). In addition, the Experimental Station was awarded a USDA Farmers Market SNAP Support Grant program to provide \$150,000 to up to 50 Illinois farmers markets to help cover costs associated with their SNAP programs in 2016 and 2017. 33 markets have so far received funding under that grant.

3) With the aim of seeking long-term sources of funding for LINK Up Illinois, in the past four years, Experimental Station has developed a statewide strategy that includes establishing partnerships with agencies and organizations working in the health sector. These natural partners in the effort to assist low-income Illinoisans to gain affordable access to fresh and healthy foods include Harmony WellCare, the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago's Children (CLOCC), the American Heart Association, the Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity (IAPO), the Illinois Public Health Institute (IPHI), and others. Since 2014, they have committed funds (Harmony WellCare), convening capacity and advocacy (CLOCC, IAPO, IPHI), and legislative guidance and expertise (American Heart Association). As a result of our work with these partners, in 2016, Illinois' legislature approved the creation of the Healthy Local Food Incentives Fund to help support SNAP incentives for the purchase of fruits and vegetables sold at Illinois farmers markets and direct-to-consumer venues. The legislation (SB 1367) provides for a \$500,000 grant to pilot a state-funded nutrition incentives program and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

2. Impact of Project on Intended Beneficiaries

- i. Number of direct jobs created: 1 full-time *Eat Up!* staff position May-October 2015; 2 full-time (June-October 2016) and 1 part-time (May-December 2016) *Eat Up!* staff positions
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 1 full-time, year round Market manager position
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: Not available
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 1 expanded (61st Street Farmers Market); 10 additional markets supported through *Eat Up!*; 72 farmers markets and market site SNAP / DVCP programs supported in 2016 through LINK Up Illinois
- v. Number of new markets established: N/A
- vi. 61st Street Farmers Market SNAP/DVCP/Credit/Debit/Food Rx sales increased by \$16,839 (from \$65,902 in 2014 and \$78,823 in 2015 to \$82,741 in 2016), an increase of 26% over 2014.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project at the 61st Street Farmers Market:
 - a. # of farmers/producers: 16 in 2014, 18 in 2015, 19 in 2016 (total vendors: 30 in 2014, 33 in 2015, 31 in 2016)
 - b. Percent Increase: 15.8% increase in farmers/producers from 2014 to 2016

3. Expansion of Customer Base To New Populations

The 61st Street Farmers Market works continuously to expand our SNAP customer base through weekly visits to the DHS office, where SNAP is administered. There we speak directly to SNAP enrollees about

our Market and the Double Value Coupon Program and distribute fresh fruit from the Market, giving these potential Market customers a taste of what they will find.

Additionally, in 2016 Experimental Station's Executive Director served on the Cook County Food Access Task Force, which is working with numerous community partners to expand healthy food access to SNAP clients residing in south suburban Cook County. In 2016, with USDA FINI and other funding, Experimental Station's LINK Up Illinois program sought to expand EBT and SNAP Double Value nutrition incentives to farmers markets located in south suburban Cook County.

4. Community Partnerships

The Experimental Station enjoys numerous active and productive partnerships at the local, city, state and national level. A few among these are: Carnegie Elementary School, Jackson Park Terrace Apartments, University of Chicago Medicine, Harmony WellCare, City of Chicago, Illinois Farmers Market Association, Wholesome Wave, Illinois Public Health Institute, Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity, Illinois Stewardship Alliance, American Heart Association.

Contributions To Achieved Results

Carrying out the 61st Street Farmers Market in-school, after-school and adult food education program requires close collaboration with Carnegie School teachers and administrators and Jackson Park Terrace Apartments management. These community partners are key to enabling more than 200 children and adults each year to learn how to eat healthfully and to grow and prepare their own food.

In 2016, Experimental Station continued to partner with University of Chicago Medicine's Improving South Side Diabetes project (led by Drs. Monica Peek and Marshall Chin, Co-Principal Investigators of the project), to build our Fruit & Veggie Prescription program, launched in 2012. Improving South Side Diabetes provided funds for the Fruit & Veggie Rx program and maintained a tent/table at the Market each week to welcome patients and provide weekly tours of the Market. Tours focused on healthy eating, seasonality of locally grown produce, how to prepare the produce available at the Market, and how to benefit the most as diabetics from the farmers market. Participants also attended the Market's weekly chef demonstrations, tasted dishes prepared with Illinois Specialty Crops, and received recipes. As a reward and incentive, participants received \$7 in Market Money vouchers to spend on foods sold at the Market.

In partnership with Harmony WellCare, Illinois' largest Medicaid provider, Experimental Station was able to carry out our *Eat Up!* initiative in both 2015 and 2016. Each year from 2014 to 2016, Harmony WellCare has granted funding to Experimental Station to help build the Community Health Market model, supporting *Eat Up!* expansion and Double Value Coupon nutrition incentives. Our partnership with Harmony WellCare has been central to leveraging SNAP Double Value nutrition incentive funding from the City of Chicago for Chicago farmers markets.

Partners in Experimental Station's LINK Up Illinois program, the Illinois Farmers Market Association provides opportunities for EBT training and for state advocacy for our farmers market programming, while Wholesome Wave offers national advocacy, data reporting tools and fundraising support for Double Value Coupon nutrition incentive programs.

Among a host of other members of a statewide coalition built by Experimental Station since 2013 to support the expansion of Double Value Coupon Programs in Illinois, the American Heart Association, Illinois Public Health Institute, Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity and Illinois Stewardship Alliance have been critical to the effort to bring state funding to Double Value nutrition incentive programs.

Partner Contributions to Future Results

We anticipate that we will continue these partnerships in the future as we further deepen and expand our 61st Street Farmers Market in-school, after-school and summer gardening instruction, as well as the LINK Up Illinois markets we serve. In particular, with state funding for nutrition incentives on the near horizon, we anticipate that our state and national partners will be helpful in ensuring that the state funding will be realized.

5. Contractors' Contributions to Achieved Results

Most of the Experimental Station's work is carried out by Experimental Station staff. However, we do contract for specialized services, such as cooking class instruction and additional assistance with our garden programming.

6. Publication of Results

i. In February 2016, the Experimental Station published *LINK Up Illinois 2011-2015 Report*, providing five-year data and rationale for a statewide and partially state-funded Double Value Coupon Program. Experimental Station also created a 61st Street Farmers Market 2015 Stats Sheet to report on data collected from our own market.

The Experimental Station also has many opportunities to present our results at local, state and national conferences and meetings. With nine years of experience operating EBT and Double Value Coupon programs at the 61st Street Farmers Market, seven years of experience providing EBT and Double Value Coupon programs for as many as 22 City of Chicago farmers markets, and six years of experience building a statewide network of farmers markets offering Double Value Coupon Programs, Experimental Station has become a resource for farmers and farmers markets, offering free SNAP/EBT consulting and trainings via webinars, farmers market forums, and other venues. Moreover, as co-chair of CLOCC's Food Access Task Force and chair of the Cook County Food Access Task Force Work Group, Experimental Station Executive Director Connie Spreen has numerous opportunities throughout the year to speak to groups about LINK Up Illinois and the 61st Street Farmers Market's food education and other programming.

ii. 61st Street Farmers Market annual reports are provided to a variety of stakeholders, including 61st Street Farmers Market customers, program partners, funding agencies and donors, local and state legislators. LINK Up Illinois reports are provided to program partners, farmers market partners, funding agencies, donors, coalition partners, local and state legislators.

iii. The 61st Street Farmers Market annual report is distributed electronically to approximately 2,200 Experimental Station contacts, customers, partners and funders and in hard copy to as many as 100 stakeholders. The *LINK Up Illinois 2011-2015 Report* was distributed to 2,400 Experimental Station contacts, local and national partners, funders, and local and state legislators.

7. Feedback From the Community

i. The 61st Street Farmers Market carries out an annual survey, in partnership with the University of Chicago Survey Lab. This survey enables Experimental Station to gather demographic and customer preference/behavior data and to assess program effectiveness. We also collect data through surveys conducted at the completion of Carnegie Elementary food education classes. LINK Up Illinois partner markets provide an annual report narrative, wherein they include feedback from customers. In 2016, Experimental Station created a SNAP customer survey implemented at six Illinois farmers markets located throughout the state, to ascertain the impact of the Double Value Coupon Program on their purchasing and health. Additionally, in 2016 Experimental Station made video recordings of SNAP customers expressing their experience with the Double Value Coupon Program.

ii. Collected Feedback

- In 2015, one regular customer at the 61st Street Farmers Market reported losing 50 pounds since shopping at the Market!
- “One customer in particular was very appreciative of the [Double Value Coupon] program. She commented on how first of all, without the program she would not be able to afford the type of quality, fresh foods offered at farmers markets. She went on to say that she really has learned how important, especially in her older age, it is to be eating healthy foods and in particular fruits and vegetables. She recognizes the quality of food at the farmers market is better than at the grocery store and feels that the organic produce really does taste better and that she feels it is healthier. It seemed to me that she had gained a lot of knowledge about nutrition through trying out new foods from the farmers market and appreciated being able to take care of her body thanks to healthy eating.” (Wicker Park Farmers Market)
- “A young man and his mother, residents of Lowden Homes, a housing development next door to our church, came to visit the market for the first time. We had just rolled out the Double Bucks program. (We were not able to roll it out until August 15.) During their tour of the market we informed them of the program! They became excited and returned to shop every other week until the market ended. They were excited about being able to buy more fruits and vegetables using their Link [SNAP].” (Trinity UCC Farmers Market)
- “One person told me that she had been a TV/Radio marketing professional for many years. She became ill with auto immunity issues and had to leave her job. As a result, she lost her benefits, income, etc., and relies on Link to get by. She has become a vegetarian, preferring veganism when she can afford it, to help manage her health issues and told me recently that our tokens and grants for Link shoppers help her eat healthy consistently.” (Glenwood Sunday Market)
- “I want to eat more apples, tomatoes, kale and strawberries.” (Carnegie School 3rd grader)

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? The 61st Street Farmers Market generates income through vendor fees and merchandise sales (maple syrup, coffee, t-shirts).

- a. How much was generated and how was it used? A total of \$40,665 was generated in 2015 and 2016 and was used to cover the costs of Market supplies, additional Market promotion, EBT

staffing, and EBT processing fees.

9. Lessons Learned

- We learned that our investment in Eat Up! was enormously beneficial for generating funding for LINK Up Illinois' Double Value Coupon Program from the health sector. Health sector partners have demonstrated great excitement over the prospect of gathering actual customer data at the Market, as customers are receiving information about their health and being encouraged to eat more healthfully.
- Since the spring of 2014, we have altered our way of tracking numbers of SNAP customers. In the past, SNAP customers were calculated by number of SNAP transactions. In 2014, Experimental Station began to record the last five digits of the customer's LINK/SNAP benefits card. In so doing, we became able to identify the number of unique SNAP customers shopping at the farmers markets at which we provide EBT/DVCP. We saw consistent SNAP participation from 2015 to 2016, based on the number of unique SNAP customers shopping at the 61st Street Farmers Market. However, we did not see the growth that we anticipated. We attribute this to at least two possible causes: 1) since 2013, Experimental Station has been able to expand the Double Value Coupon Program to more than 40 market sites in Chicago, making the program available throughout the city; 2) it has been reported that nearly 1/3 of SNAP recipients stop receiving benefits within a year, making it possible that SNAP customers one year are no longer SNAP customers the next.

10. Future Work

- In addition to continuing our in-school and after-school programming at Carnegie Elementary School, the 61st Street Farmers Market will continue to deepen the educational programming we provide to the Jackson Park Terrace residents. In 2017, we will undertake a "Crockpot Project," whereby Jackson Park Terrace low-income residents will have the opportunity to learn to cook with a slow cooker, thereby providing a slow cooking solution to the problem of unhealthy fast food—as well as the common problem in low-income communities of a lack of functioning stove or cookware. At the end of the 3-lesson course, each participant will receive a crockpot, cutting board and knife. Through this initiative, participants will also be introduced to the 61st Street Farmers Market and our SNAP Double Value program.
- Experimental Station will continue to expand the LINK Up Illinois network, anticipating that we will fund between 80-90 market sites by 2018, including several community health clinics located in south suburban Chicago and food cooperatives in the central and southern parts of the state. In so doing, we aim to continue to lay the groundwork for a partially state-funded program.
- In 2017, Experimental Station will work with the University of Illinois at Chicago Institute For Public Health to analyze the SNAP customer health metrics data collected through the Eat Up! initiative. We hope that, with this data, we will be able to demonstrate the health benefits of encouraging SNAP clients to shop at Illinois farmers markets.