

## Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market 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 LFPP 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 your assigned grant specialist to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: [USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov); Fax: 202-720-0300

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact LFPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

<b>Report Date Range:</b> <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30 <sup>th</sup> 2015- September 29 <sup>th</sup> 2016
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	April Harrington
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<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Growing Home
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Assessment of Community Impact of Urban Farm and Training Expansion
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15-LFPP-IL-0160
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2015
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Chicago, IL
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$25,000

LFPP 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 LFPP 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: Engage the Englewood community in a 3-month assessment of the potential community impact of Growing Home’s urban farm and training expansion.

- a. Progress Made: Growing Home has successfully completed a 4-month assessment of the community impact of our expansion. The process was led by our Outreach Director, Kristin Miodonski, and facilitated in part by Maria Moon, a contracted Outreach Assistant and graduate of our job training program. The process included meetings with community leaders and residents, and administration of a survey to 280 individuals who live or work in the area. The surveys were completed through canvassing, attending community meetings, and tabling at various community events.

The surveys and meetings captured both quantitative and qualitative data about food and job access in Englewood, where our farms are located. The survey design was influenced by the USDA publication, “The Economics of Local Food Systems: A Toolkit to Guide Community Discussions, Assessments and Choices,” and consultations with professionals. It included 22 questions in three sections: Food Access, Job Access, and Demographics. The results are shared in the sections below, and in the attached report.

- b. Impact on Community: The survey showed that out of the 280 individuals surveyed, 67% lived in the Greater Englewood area, and 61% worked in the Greater Englewood area. The vast majority of respondents, 92%, identified as Black or African American, while 70% identified as female and 43% cited their age as 25-44.

Each of the respondents were given the opportunity to share their thoughts about food and job issues in Greater Englewood, and learn more about the services offered at Growing Home. Many respondents had not known about Growing Home previously and were happy to learn about our low-cost farm stands and night markets in the area, or our job training program. We hope that some of the respondents take advantage of our programs now that they know they exist in their neighborhood. We also hope that the individuals and groups we engaged in the assessment will remain involved in the planning process for our expansion, and therefore directly benefit from the expanded services once the development is complete.

- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Understand the needs of the Englewood community regarding food access in a documented food desert including how Growing Home can provide programming to increase consumption of USDA-certified organic vegetables.

a. Progress Made: The survey results found that most respondents (43%) shop for 2-3 people when grocery shopping, most travel by car (74%), and most get their groceries at a supermarket (62%). On average, it took 40% of respondents 15-30 minutes to get to wherever they bought their groceries, and it took 30% of respondents 30-60 minutes.

When asked, “What is most important to you when purchasing food?” the top responses were freshness, affordability, and healthiness, in that order. Organic ranked fourth, and convenience ranked fifth. These findings suggest that residents are used to driving distances to access the fresh and affordable food that they seek.

When asked, “What would make it easier for people in the neighborhood to buy and eat healthy food?” respondents suggested opening more stores and providing more education about preparing or growing food.

b. Impact on Community: Through our community engagement process, we have learned that Growing Home can make a positive impact on the food system in Englewood by providing more fresh, affordable, and healthy food. Prior to engaging community members in this planning process, Growing Home had considered a number of options for bringing more food into the community with our expansion. These included expanding our farms, opening a café, starting a community kitchen, building a garden store and nursery, and opening a year-round daily permanent market. The survey results suggest that a permanent store or market, stocked with more of our fresh, affordable, and healthy produce, is the best way to address the food interests in our community.

After learning these results, we will move forward with business planning to assess the feasibility of running a store and expanding our farms. Our planning process will take time, and it will take some years to raise the funds needed to fulfill our goals, but we hope to serve the interests of our neighbors as identified in this assessment as soon as possible. We will also consider ways to increase access to our food in the near future, such as through a local CSA or expanded local sales.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Understand the needs of the Englewood community regarding employment training in a community with a 21.3% unemployment rate including how Growing Home can provide programming to increase job skills for residents.

a. Progress Made: The survey results found that 38% of respondents were working full-time, 15% were employed part-time, and 18% were out-of-work and looking. 82% stated that they would find a 14-week paid job training program very useful if they were unemployed, and most also indicated that job fairs and workshops would be useful. When unemployed survey respondents were asked what their greatest barriers to employment were, the most cited answer was transportation, followed by access to employers, job training, housing, resume/cover letters, and childcare.

When asked “What else would be helpful in finding/keeping a job?” in a write-in section, eleven respondents mentioned increased opportunity, eleven mentioned training or education, seven mentioned job fairs, six mentioned transportation, and three mentioned childcare.

b. Impact on Community: Through our community engagement process, we have learned that Growing Home can make a positive impact on employment opportunity in Englewood by expanding our job training program and offering more job-related services to the general public. The survey suggests that serving more individuals through our 14-week job training program would be beneficial to residents who are out-of-work and looking. This has always been a goal for our expansion, and will continue to be a priority as we continue to plan for development.

The survey also suggested that more services that are open to the public would be useful to residents, including job fairs and workshops. Since many cited “access to employers” as a barrier to employment, Growing Home should consider building a public job resource center with access to job boards, computers, and assistance with resumes or job searches.

iv. Goal/Objective 4: Complete an actionable report addressing the ways in which Growing Home can demonstrably impact the lack of food and employment equity in the Englewood community.

a. Progress Made: A 13-page report has been compiled by Kristin Miodonski, our Outreach Director, and will be presented to Growing Home’s Board of Directors in early 2017. The “Food and Job Access In Englewood” report will be presented alongside the results of a capital campaign feasibility study, which began in September and will conclude in January. Both reports will inform the next steps towards building our expansion site.

The report is included with this grant report for your review.

b. Impact on Community: Our four-month community assessment has concluded that Growing Home can make a positive impact on food and employment equity in the Englewood community, most notably by making our fresh, affordable, and healthy food more accessible by building a store, by expanding our job training program, and by connecting individuals with employers through job fairs and other resources. It will take several years before our plans will become reality, but we intend to continue to consult with community members as our plans move forward, and hope to serve many of them through our expanded programming in the future.

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, the Outreach Assistant hired to work on this project

- ii. Number of jobs retained: 0
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 0
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 0
- v. Number of new markets established: 0
- vi. Market sales increased by \$0 and increased by 0%.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 0
  - a. Percent Increase: 0

\*\*\*Note: this project was a planning activity for the expansion of our campus. When the expansion is complete, new jobs will be created, our market will expand, and sales will increase.

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?

During the assessment, Growing Home was able to reach many individuals who hadn't heard about Growing Home before. In their interaction with staff, they were introduced to our mission and programs, including our affordable farm stand, healthy living workshops, and job training programs. Many showed an interest in taking advantage of these services after learning about them so we're hopeful to see our farm stand attendance numbers rise, and an increase in local interest in our job training program.

Demographically, the individuals surveyed resemble the individuals we already serve, so we did not reach out to new demographics in a significant way.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.
- i. Who are your community partners?

Our community partners include Teamwork Englewood, RAGE, I Grow Chicago, Grow Greater Englewood, Hermitage Gardens, South West Federation Block Clubs, Voices of West Englewood, Imagine Englewood If, Greater Englewood Community Development Corporation, Kusanya Café, Metropolitan Family Services, Alderman Raymond Lopez, and Feed, Clothe, Help the Needy (FCHN).

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

Our community partnerships are critical to our success and we greatly value their input. Early in the community assessment phase, our Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer met with leaders from Teamwork Englewood, RAGE, and Kusanya. Throughout the process, our Outreach Director has worked with local partners to gain access to residents through canvassing, tabling, and community meetings.

Our Outreach team attended a meeting at Metropolitan Family Services; gathered survey results at a local soup kitchen, Feed, Clothe, and Help the Needy (FCHN); spoke about the survey at a Resident's Association of Greater Englewood (RAGE) meeting; gathered surveys at the RAGE So Fresh Saturdays monthly festival; and collected surveys at Kusanya café, the local library, and the local park. We also scheduled a meeting at FCHN, but it was cancelled at the last minute and moved to a local church.

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

Our community partners will play a significant role in the continued planning process for our site expansion. We will continue to consult with them as our site plan changes to reflect new findings, and we will make sure to inform them of our progress at each stage. When we begin work, we hope to use local contractors and workers as much as possible.

- 5. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?

Growing Home hired Maria Moon, one of our program graduates and a resident of Englewood, as a contracted Outreach Assistant to help facilitate the assessment process. Her assistance was vital to reach the 280 people we collected surveys from. She attended many community events and led canvassing efforts, something our Outreach Director would not have the time to do. As an Englewood resident and graduate of Growing Home, she was well-prepared to speak about our programs and relate to other residents. She also helped to compile the data collected.

- 6. Have you publicized any results yet? No. The results will be shared with our boards at a retreat in early 2017 to discuss the progress of our expansion plans. Results will also be shared with the community leaders that were consulted in the process once we decide on the next steps and a timeline for project completion.

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

\*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? As described earlier, we administered a survey to 280 people and met with several community leaders.
- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? Here is a sampling of specific comments collected from surveys and meetings:  
In response to, "What would make it easier for people in the neighborhood to buy and eat healthy food?"
  - a. "Access to more places that provide affordable healthy options, as well as education about ways to prepare healthy meals."
  - b. "Maybe a store that offers healthy food and allows people to try/taste healthy food and a variety of ways to cook it."

- c. "Availability in walking distance of where people live. My neighbors say they don't have cars. Box schemes are also good where you deliver a box of vegetables by car."

In response to, "What else would be helpful for your community in finding or keeping a job?"

- d. "Consistent communication of job opportunities, financial assistance when searching for jobs."
- e. "Wrap around services to help people stay on track. Case manager, employment services, holistic approach."

Comments collected at community meetings:

- f. "Food should be affordable and convenient. If you can't drive it is hard, things get wilted and soft, and it is often inconvenient."
- g. "Grow whatever could be farmed that could be usable and popular and things that people in the community eat... What about seedlings and growing yourself? Like what there is to offer now [at GH], if that could be expanded would help the community more."

#### 8. Budget Summary:

- i. As part of the LFPP 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: X
- 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. Draw from positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).

We felt that the method for creating our survey was successful and provided an unbiased and simple survey that captured the information we were seeking. This included referencing the USDA's "The Economics of Local Food Systems," report that outlined different community assessment models, and consulting with two experts: a survey professional at The University of Chicago Survey Lab, and a research fellow at the Institute for Health Research and Policy at the University of Illinois at Chicago. By taking these steps in the planning of our assessment, we feel that we were able to achieve the results we were looking for.

Two challenges we faced in the implementation of the assessment include low attendance at community meetings, and poor response rates on the questions listed on the backside of the survey. If we conducted a similar process again, we would brainstorm ways to increase turnout at meetings, and print the survey on two stapled sheets of paper to ensure that respondents would see all the questions.

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

When Growing Home planned meetings, they had low attendance despite spreading the word through a variety of avenues. However, when we partnered with other organizations who were already getting groups together, we were able to reach more residents and complete more surveys. We would suggest to others completing a similar assessment to leverage partnerships in this way to achieve better results.

- iii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:

While Growing Home made a significant effort to collect feedback from a variety of locations (our farm stand, local library, local park, local café, new Whole Foods opening celebration, outside a neighborhood hangout, canvassing, local monthly festival), the survey respondents did not fully reflect the demographics of the area. In particular, 70% of respondents were female. We would that others conducting a similar project that research methods for reaching a representative group of respondents to inform their practices.

#### 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 responses gathered in this community impact assessment will directly impact our growth in the immediate future as we plan to expand our campus. The needs of our community, as stated in this report, will be considered alongside the results of further business planning and the results of a capital campaign feasibility study.

We also hope to act on some of the information we've gathered before developing our new site, as indicated in the "short-term recommendations" section at the close of the report. Some short-term recommendations include extending farm stand hours, partnering with local farmers markets and stores, starting an Englewood-based CSA, and implementing more food-focused gardening workshops. Each of these recommendations will be considered and weighed against staff capacity and financial constraints in the coming year.

- 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 community assessment is one step in Growing Home's planning process for the development of a new site, which will more than double the current size of our campus. The first and initial step was the creation of a site plan with Teska Associates, a planning consultancy firm, as described in our interim report. That process was finished in early 2016 and allowed us to move on to the community assessment and capital campaign feasibility study.

The feasibility study is currently being conducted by DeVine Consulting and will be completed in early 2017. The results of the study will inform our next steps, and the ultimate timeline for the completion of the project. We expect that it will take several years, but are excited with each step that we take. Growing Home values careful and responsible planning, and are grateful to the USDA for supporting our planning process. We hope to apply for an LFPP implementation grant in the coming years.