

**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; Fax: 202-720-0300

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

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	4/1/2018-5/1/2018
Authorized Representative Name:	Randy J. Bukas, ICMA – CM
Authorized Representative Phone:	815-297-1300
Authorized Representative Email:	financedirector@cityoffreeport.org
Recipient Organization Name:	City of Freeport
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Pretzel City Kitchens
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15LFPPIL0159
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Freeport, Illinois
Total Awarded Budget:	\$100,000

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: Margaret Larson; Email: mklarson@illinois.edu; Phone: 815-235-4125

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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: Support Economic Development

a. Progress Made:

- Region now has a shared use commercial grade kitchen for new business growth.
- Worked with county health department and small business collaborative to simplify the startup process for new business
- Kitchen manager is trained to provide food related business start up information to potential users, and we have several users, as anticipated, that are starting their businesses at the kitchen
- Construction costs were not part of the grant-supported activities for this project. However, secondary economic development for the vendors that completed work to build out the kitchen, which includes hvac, electrical, refrigeration, security, and finish work

b. Impact on Community:

- Healthy eating habits have been identified by both the county health department and the primary local healthcare organization as priorities for community education. As such, the need for a public, easily accessible, readily available, completely certified community kitchen is an important element in being able to deliver programming and educational events for a wide variety of demographics, including underserved and un/under-insured populations, those with chronic conditions (diabetes, obesity challenges, etc.), and the elderly, a larger number than ever of whom are being called upon to raise their grandchildren in a food/dietary environment unlike the ones in which they raised their own children. There are only 2-3 other “public kitchens” in the two counties most closely associated with Pretzel City Kitchens, and as they are part of agencies where nutrition and dietary information is not a primary mission deliverable, they are much less available to organizations such as the health department, healthcare organizations, and educational institutions who are the primary purveyors of programming for the audiences identified earlier.

ii. Goal/Objective 2: Stimulate Downtown Reinvestment

a. Progress Made:

- Pretzel City Kitchens, 218 Properties (lessor of the kitchen), city of Freeport partnered to upgrade the over 100 year old former printing company and warehouse building and surrounding streetscape including water, sewer, beautification, and access
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds from the city of Freeport were leveraged to cover expenses related to reinvestment

b. Impact on Community:

- The kitchen functions as the business for startup and small food businesses
- The location of Pretzel City Kitchens also lends itself to being an attractive location for businesses to host team-building events, organizations looking for a location to prepare food in large quantities for fundraising efforts and charitable events, and individuals wanting to experience a cooking environment similar to that found on highly popular chef/cooking programs. All of these provide opportunities for additional revenue streams beyond revenue generated by individuals renting the kitchen for their own commercial purposes and add to the Kitchens' ability to have a positive, broad, sustained, and lasting impact on the community at large.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Improve Food Security

a. Progress Made:

- Provide a certified shared use kitchen to food businesses previously operating outside proper health department requirements
- Provide a certified shared use kitchen to downtown events providing food, i.e. chili cookoff, Chopped-like events, Brewfest, Winefest

b. Impact on Community:

- These food businesses provide access to food safely prepared in a neighborhood lacking food options
- Kitchen is used by Culinary Arts high school students that are below the poverty threshold and eat prepared foods otherwise inaccessible

iv. Goal/Objective 4: Enhance Community Health and Wellness

a. Progress Made:

- Kitchen is a site for educational workshops, i.e. Food preservation workshop, Certified Food Protection Manager Training, Culinary Arts community classes
- Kitchen has partnered with Connect the DOTS, a community support group, to address chronic health situations. Events include: Chopped with healthy food staples, Slow Cooker Cooking, Using Farmer's Market Produce, Safe Food Preservation
- Local and state health department regulations are now readily available for members of the community in an easier to access format

b. Impact on Community:

- Greater understanding of safe food preparation
- Increased community partnerships to execute activities among those with shared vision and goals
- Having food safety regulations, permits and processes required of users for food businesses readily available improves the likelihood of compliance and follow through to become successful in their business

- v. Goal/Objective 5: Expand Youth Opportunity
 - a. Progress Made:
 - CareerTEC, regional consortium for secondary students in the Culinary Occupations program, has moved to the Pretzel City Kitchens providing more square footage and cooktop space to teach within.
 - CareerTEC Culinary students in the second year interned with Pretzel City Kitchens, the Wagner House which PCK is within, and surrounding downtown food businesses
 - Highland Community College Hospitality and Tourism students can intern with Pretzel City Kitchens manager for workplace experience
 - b. Impact on Community:
 - Enrollment in the CareerTEC Culinary Occupations program has increased and is the third most popular program of 14 options.
 - Increased Highland Community College graduates awareness of opportunities in the region, which will retain talent in our region
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, 20__). Include further explanation if necessary.
 - i. Number of direct jobs created: 1, Pretzel City Kitchen Manager
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: 0 to date
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 1, CareerTEC Culinary instructor moved from part time to full time because increased enrollment in the Culinary Occupations course.
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: 0 to date
 - 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 to date
 - a. Percent Increase: 0%
 3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?
 - Yes, some users that have participated in the informational meetings are minority, low income and access populations.
 - Yes, a portion of the CareerTEC students are below the poverty threshold and reside in low access neighborhoods
 - Yes, a new local restaurant owner who is a minority woman is working with us. This is unique as this occupation is traditionally male.
 4. Discuss your community partnerships.
 - i. Who are your community partners? Blackhawk Hills Regional Council, University of Illinois Extension, CareerTEC, Freeport Downtown Development Foundation, Stephenson County Health Department, M45 Marketing Services, Highland Community College, 218 Properties, FHN Community Health Organization, Freeport Community Foundations, Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, State Bank of Freeport, and the City of Freeport.
 - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council: provided leadership of planning and advisory committee for a period of time. Currently is providing assistance with marketing to a large area in northwestern Illinois. Has pledged to continue to look for appropriate grants for the project.

University of Illinois Extension: has provided expertise and office support for the project over the years. Staff work with farmers market vendors and local growers so are able to share information about the kitchen in their communications. Nutrition educator is teaching food safety and sanitation trainings there as well as food preservation classes. Extension provides access to information and resources from campus based faculty. The director of the Extension Unit which serves the area is the President of the Board of Directors.

CareerTEC: has been involved in planning and community outreach as well as fundraising. Planning for use of the kitchen by the Culinary Occupations program has assisted the board and provided additional information and resources. CareerTEC is an anchor tenant of the kitchen and provides funding and assistance with marketing. Additionally, having high school students from the area involved with the kitchen is great word of mouth marketing. CareerTEC Director is Secretary of the Board of Directors.

Freeport Main Street (formerly Freeport Downtown Development Foundation): Assisted with publicity, user recruitment and marketing. Acted as fiscal agent for the project until 501c-3 status was achieved. Former Freeport Downtown Development Foundation board member is a PCK board member.

Stephenson County Health Department: Involved in the planning process each step of the way, providing information to guide different types of users as they consider renting the space. During design and build out of the kitchen, and earlier during process of selecting site, Health Department personnel were very involved and offered suggestions and information as appropriate.

M45 Marketing Service: Owner is a member of the board and has had an interest in the project for many years. Has provided excellent guidance on promoting the kitchen, as well as communicating with the community and elected officials during the planning and build out process.

Highland Community College: Hospitality Management Program Instructor is a member of the board and has brought extensive expertise about kitchens, food related businesses and the local food community to the project. Has provided opportunities to use his students to assist with related projects and activities.

Local food business owner: Assisted with build out suggestions, equipment purchases, connections to other local food entrepreneurs.

218 Properties: The owners of the building that the kitchen occupies have been very collaborative and supportive and have contributed to the project by funding the build out of the space.

FHN, Freeport Community Foundation, Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, Freeport Park District and the State Bank of Freeport have made donations to support the kitchen over the past four years. Donations have been monetary and kitchen equipment.

The City of Freeport has administered the USDA Grant, as well as two previously awarded and completed grants.

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

The organizations that have been instrumental in getting the kitchen operational will all stay involved. Hopefully the community foundations will be able to provide funds for special efforts and projects in the future.

The City of Freeport will not have an active role in the kitchen after the grant is wrapped up, but will continue to issue the permit for occupancy, promote the kitchen for regional use, and partner where appropriate.

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

- Contractors were used for HVAC, electrical, security, work contributed was required for build out and transform space to empty warehouse to secure commercial kitchen. USDA grant funds were not used for our costs and contractor's payments.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?* Yes.

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

- Pretzel City Kitchens website, www.pretzelcitykitchens.org
- Email communication to Farmers Market Managers, Small Farmers food and products, Freeport and Rockford Chamber of Commerce members and partner contacts
- Local television and radio stations
- Local newspapers
- Partner websites
- Chamber publications
- Word of mouth
- Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat
- The board president and Freeport Main Street Director presented a workshop about Pretzel City Kitchens and all the community partnerships that have made it possible to 75 people, with information about the kitchen at the National Main Street Conference in 2017

- ii. To whom did you publicize the results?

In addition to sharing the results of the project as listed above, the staff of the University of Illinois Extension will be sharing the results of the project with colleagues throughout the state and offering assistance to other communities in Illinois and the tri-state area who might be interested in exploring a similar undertaking.

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

The press we have received from the two larger papers in the area, in Freeport and Rockford, IL have large readerships In a large geographic area. Our contact numbers for local food producers and supporters in the NW Illinois region number around 400. Our social media sites are gaining new followers each week and especially after we host an event and share photos or a video.

*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?
 - Board members collected information from county health department staff throughout the process of build out, rules and regulations and user recruitment
 - PCK Manager held informational sessions and documented feedback from participants then shared with the PCK board for potential action items to address
 - University of Illinois Extension personnel, a project partner, discussed the kitchen with their participants in a variety of workshops held throughout the region
 - Board members of the kitchen visited other shared use kitchen sites to walk through and interview personnel for ideas
 - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?
 - Types of products that can be prepared and sold are controlled by local and state health department regulations
 - Additional uses of the kitchen, such as private parties, youth organizations, church projects, pop up food events
 - Cost of using the kitchen per hour
 - Reactions to potential uses and current practices
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:
 - ii. Did the project generate any income? Yes
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

To Date:

 - Blackhawk Hills Regional Council: \$5,000
 - State Bank for Freeport: \$1200
 - FHN Health System: \$5,000
 - Freeport Community Foundation: \$9600
 - Community Foundation of Northern Illinois: \$2,000
 - 9 East: Equipment donation
 - Freeport Park District: equipment donation

- Local Restaurant Owner: reduced cost equipment
- Kitchen Users:
 - CareerTEC anchor tenant rent: \$800
 - University of Illinois Extension: \$1200
 - Wagner House: \$600

These funds are used for ongoing expenses for the kitchen including rent, phone, supplies and materials, and marketing.

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).

Work with the local health department and State Department of Public Health from the onset. Develop and maintain positive working relationships with administration and staff and gather information which allows those involved to provide information, but continue to refer questions to the appropriate staff members as necessary.

Involve the local Extension Office. While local staff may not have the necessary expertise and resources to assist with the project, they do have access to state staff and faculty and can provide resources and assistance.

Build out is time consuming, expensive and full of surprises and delays. Even with the best relationship with the landlord, communication is challenging.

Partners are the key and can make or break the project. Look beyond the assumptions everyone may have about who is in control and move forward with logic. For example, having CareerTEC as a tenant has provided us with an organization that has been valuable in the planning stages, that has a regional outreach, that provides access to the areas youth who are interested in food and culinary occupations, and is willing to provide assistance in a variety of ways. As CareerTEC moved into the kitchen last spring, they brought all their kitchen equipment with them, adding a great deal to the list of equipment available to users.

This project had several roadblocks. The first was the effort to involve too many people in the planning process, without anyone taking a leadership role and moving the project towards completion. Because this project had been on the books in the area for many years, it seemed that the pace and the process didn't change when the large USDA Grant was awarded. The reality didn't necessarily change and monthly planning meetings still talked about hypotheticals and what ifs. Note that the advisory committee at the time numbered at about 20 individuals from a cross section of the community. Some had a lot to offer the project, while others had very little to offer but were insistent at being at the table.

After some changes in lead agencies for the project, a small board of six was asked to serve, and moved forward with frequent meetings, a lot of smaller group work, and a realization that the project was actually going to happen. Being left off the official board actually offended several individuals, but it was clear that a small group of people with complementary skills and supportive businesses and organizations were what was going to move the project forward at the pace necessitated by the grant. In actuality, one of the first things that should have happened was the establishment of the 501c-3 and the formation of a formal board of directors. The 501c-3 process is complicated and lengthy, but allows for the project itself to apply for grants, eliminating the need for a fiscal agent and potential communication issues.

An effective board of directors for a project like this should be assembled with intention and forethought. Individuals with ties to local food producers (farmers market vendors, small fruit and vegetable producers, grain growers, etc) are necessary to inform them of the uses of the kitchen. Individuals with professional culinary, small business management and marketing with graphic design experience are invaluable. Those with links to education at secondary and post-secondary levels can provide important connections to students/users.

One valuable member of a board, which we do not have, would be someone with contracting and commercial buildout experience. That individual could be useful in providing insight in terms of appropriate space, resources and actual buildout costs as the project proceeded. Our board, and those involved, leaned on several individuals throughout the process and in hind sight, we are not convinced that the information we were given was in the best interest of the project.

Working relationships and knowledge of community leadership, elected officials, regulatory officials and other key stakeholders is very important. If board members have led previous community or regional-based projects, their prior contacts, experiences and knowledge can really enhance the effectiveness of the project at hand.

This project moved along through the terms of three Freeport mayors and five Freeport Community Development Directors. Several local organizations have been involved for most of the time, and one since the inception. With the city being the recipient of the grant, it has been necessary for the others involved to depend on their staff to provide administration of the grant.

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

The results of this project are multifaceted. Although the grant funds were put in place to fund the equipment, etc to open the kitchen, it was the last piece of the planning, research and actual buildout for the site. As work neared an end, the board and others had to quickly adapt to the new reality that the kitchen was going to be complete, we were going to have tenants, we were going to have outreach

into the region and we were going to be successful. The board has a very complete picture of the many uses for the kitchen and the impact it can have on the broad area as well as the local community.

Another important role that the kitchen staff can fill is in working in the area of small business development. By advising those interested in using the kitchen to start a small food related business, kitchen staff can play a role that currently is unfilled in our area. We plan to have a great deal of business startup information on our website, and the closest SBDC director, in Rockford, is aware of the kitchen and is planning a visit soon.

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

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.

We feel that one of the most important audiences for the kitchen is youth. With over 35 youth enrolled in the CareerTEC program this year, coming from four counties in the area, we are reaching an important audience who will in the near future be in a position to work with local restaurants or other food related businesses, and will be able to refer others to the kitchen. We will also be working with other youth serving agencies to involve the kitchen in their activities. Scouts, Boys and Girls Club, and 4-H Clubs will be invited to use the kitchen for meetings and programming.

- 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?

Pretzel City Kitchens Sites

Pretzel City Kitchens Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/pretzelcitykitchens>

Pretzel City Kitchens Website

<http://pretzelcitykitchens.org>