

**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:	September, 30, 2015-September 29, 2017
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Recipient Organization Name:	Sankofa Community Development
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	
Grant Agreement Number: (e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)	15LFPPLA0096
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	New Orleans, LA
Total Awarded Budget:	\$99,991

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).

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Different individual: Name: _____; Email: _____; Phone:

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: ***Improve food security in the Ninth Ward area***

Progress Made

To improve food security in the Ninth Ward area, we improved our food safety facilities, promotional systems, and expanded programming. We purchased and installed a 20’ commercial grade reefer unit to use in addition to our Coolbot cold storage unit. Both of these units are located at the Fresh Stop Market site to ensure the delivery of produce to our food hub and safe storage of food items. We now have an efficient system and schedule for receiving, managing, distributing produce and whole foods. Two staff members completed training on GAP food safety and food safe storage.

We developed signage, promotional fliers, and social media campaigns to increase awareness of local foods for potential Fresh Stop customers. We led nutrition education workshops, included signage to increase awareness of local/regional growers, and provided hands-on tastings of produce from regional growers. We maintained a low markup of our produce, with an average markup from wholesale purchases of 33%. We promoted our SNAP acceptance through grassroots outreach, fliers, and signage. We also secured additional funding to match SNAP purchases at our Fresh Stop location and Mobile Fresh Stop. We collaborated with groups that distribute SNAP and WIC benefits.

We expanded operations of the Fresh Stop Market from three weekly hours to an additional day for six weekly hours. We also expanded our mobile market to three additional weekly hours at two community-based spaces. We developed our marketing and branding through social media campaigns, website development, promotional fliers, and signage to promote the market to residents of the area and visitors alike. We also increased awareness of local foods through our healthy cooking classes that also provided Veggie RX vouchers for people to use at the markets. This partnership would enable us to affect more people, and reach neighborhood residents, who serve as 99.9 percent of the store’s customers. During the project period, State of Louisiana Farmers Market Nutrition Program [FMNP] vouchers were accepted with an increase of sales to consumers and purchases from local producers. We developed a partnership with a neighborhood corner store to sell produce to them and help promote it to SNAP benefit customers.

Impact on Community

We now have more Lower Ninth Ward resident shopping at the market, with 80 percent of the shoppers being from the area. We now have an increased presence of fresh food in the neighborhood, in an area where it is typically not available. More access to fresh produce is now available in the Lower Ninth Ward because of our consistent market operations and Veggie RX program. Additionally, our food hub is now expanding to sell fresh produce to corner stores in the Lower Ninth Ward and increase our impact. The overall community continues to benefit

from ongoing access to fresh, nutritious, locally produced food, while building a stronger and more inclusive local food system.

Goal/Objective 2: *Support sustainable use of land and economic revitalization*

Progress Made

The Fresh Stop continues to operate at 5029 St Claude Ave, a major thoroughfare in an underserved, low socioeconomic neighborhood - currently designated as a food desert area. It remains as the only consistently operating food outlet that provides a diversity of fresh food from local farmers and fishers. The Fresh Stop is located in a commercial business district in this historic downtown New Orleans neighborhood and the only permanent open-air fresh market within a 5-mile radius of the area. We now operate 6 hours of market two days a week with a plan to expand to an additional day of the week during April 2018 as demand increases.

Impact on Community:

Residents of Lower Nine have fresh market with consistent hours within an area with an abundance of stores offering processed foods and food products high in salt and sugars. We have developed partnerships with 21 local producers, 5 community-based spaces and 3 wholesale food distributors. The development of the market facilities to include two refrigerator units equipped with shelving and temperature control, a covered market area, and a handwashing sink supports sustainable use of land and economic growth within the market and the area.

Goal/Objective 3: *Expand market opportunities for agricultural producers*

Progress Made

The Fresh Stop has increased sales from local farmers with 80 percent of produce sold coming from local producers. We now operate three mobile markets and two Fresh Stop Markets in the Lower Ninth Ward area. We develop a brand for local food options at our market and connect with agricultural producers through promotion and outreach. We use flyers, social media, signage, e-newsletters, and website to reach new and returning customers. We identify local food items at the market and the names of the producers selling them. We received technical assistance from the Wallace Center at Winrock International to develop an operational manual on best practices for developing and operating a food hub. The operational manual includes systems that were recommended for food safety, food presentation, and other areas of operations to help developing community-based markets operate more efficiently and increase sustainability to enable further expansion of market opportunities for agricultural producers.

Impact on Community

We expanded our market base for the purchase of produce directly from farmers, and are now purchasing from them at a larger volume. We are continuing to build relationships with local farmers and food producers to maintain consistency of offerings. This is vital for the sustainability of the market. The offerings of incentives through Veggie Dollars programs, Louisiana State Farmer Market Nutrition Program vouchers, and other incentive programs also increased accessibility and affordability of fresh, locally produced foods within our markets and supported additional dollars spent within the local economy.

1. **Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable.**
Include further explanation if necessary.
 - i. **Number of direct jobs created: 6**
 - a. Programs Associate (1)
 - b. Gardener (1)
 - c. Programs Assistant 1
 - d. Market Assistant (2)
 - ii. **Number of jobs retained: (3)**
 - a. Bookkeeper (1)
 - b. Market Coordinator (1)
 - c. Project Manager (1)
 - iii. **Number of indirect jobs created: 0**
 - iv. **Number of markets expanded: 1**
 - v. Sankofa Fresh Stop (an additional day)
 - vi. **Number of new markets established: 2**
 - a. Villa @ St Maurice Mobile Market
 - b. Lower Nine Senior Center Mobile Market
 - vii. **Market sales**
 - a. Sales for 2015 (September 2015 to August 2016) totaled \$44,098.97
 - b. Sales for 2017 (September 2016 to August 2017) totaled \$375,166.88
**Two mobile markets outside of Lower Ninth Ward area closed during 2016*
 - viii. **Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 21**
 - 1) A&K Citrus
 - 2) Capstone Honey
 - 3) Eddie Pinto's Marina
 - 4) Gracious Bakery
 - 5) Happy Hen's Farms
 - 6) Johndales Farms
 - 7) Matt Ranatza
 - 8) Our School at Blair Grocery
 - 9) Perilloux Farms
 - 10) Sankofa Gardens
 - 11) Tomatts Cajun Farm
 - 12) Vibiana Thomas
 - 13) Tomott's Cajun Farm*
 - 14) Star Nursery
 - 15) Covey Rise Farm
 - 16) Inglewood Farm
 - 17) Two Dog Farm
 - 18) Fletcher Family Farm
 - 19) Pointe Coupee
 - 20) Fekete Farm
 - 21) Indian Springs Farmer Co-Op

**grown or foraged in Lower Ninth Ward*

Did you expand your customer base?

Yes, we expanded our customer base, primarily in the Lower Ninth Ward community by increasing our marketing and outreach systems, enrolling community members to work at the Market, and maintaining consistency with operations. We also developed community health programs that bridged participants learning about education on nutrition and cardiovascular disease risk factor with shopping for fresh produce at the market. Healthy HeartBeats, one of our community health programs increased our customer base through the participants' redemption of Veggie Prescription vouchers at the markets.

2. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners?
Our community partners are Lower Nine Senior Center, Daughters of Charity Services of New Orleans, marketumbrella.org, Second Harvest Food Bank, Villa at St Maurice, LSU Health Sciences Center, A Community Voice, Movin' for Life, The Food Trust, Wallace Center, and Southern University Ag Center.
- ii. How have they contributed to the results you've already achieved?
 - a. **Lower Nine Senior Center** and **Villa at St Maurice** are two senior centers that serve seniors through our mobile market program. They help with promotion and increase of our customer base of fresh produce in the Lower Ninth Ward. We also have a community health program, Healthy HeartBeats at these centers.
 - b. **Daughters of Charity Services of New Orleans** hosts the 'Meet me at the Market' programs to promote the Market to its patients. Through this program, Daughters of Charity patients receive vouchers for fresh produce at the Market.
 - c. **marketumbrella.org** provides Veggie RX vouchers to customers for redemption at the Market.
 - d. **Second Harvest Food Bank** provides a model and curriculum for healthy cooking classes that we use for our nutrition education program.
 - e. **Moving' for Life** promotes the Market, community gardening, and healthy cooking classes on their social media accounts.
 - f. **The Food Trust** was a part of a coalition of food -access groups to provide resources for a SNAP Match incentive at the market.
 - g. **NRCS** provided high tunnels and resources at our Tennessee St gardens to help us increase our growth of produce for the markets.
 - h. **Southern University Ag Center** provided GAP and food safety training.
 - i. **Wallace Center at Winrock International** provides technical assistance services to develop a best practices operational manual and guide for the Market.
 - j. **American Heart Association** provides heart healthy eating guidelines.
- iii. How will they contribute to future results?
The Lower Nine Senior Center and St Maurice Villa will continue to be key community – based partners from where neighborhood residents are informed of the Market programs. Daughters of Charity Services and Movin' for Life will continue to help promote the market through their vouchers and social media outlets. Funding from Tulane School of Public Health will continue during the program period to help the engagement with more SNAP benefit recipients. The Market will also continue to accept Veggie RX vouchers from marketumbrella.org to support expansion of customers from the Greater New Orleans area. Some of the produce from our market is transferred to our other community health programs, including our Fresh Food Pantry, in partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank. We have developed our partnership with American Heart

Association to provide community health program participants with guidelines for heart healthy cooking and food preparation. Movin' for Life -Tulane Prevention Research Center will continue to partner in promotion of the market to Lower Ninth Ward residents, as well as other groups throughout the Greater New Orleans area. We will present our results and impact of our market at the Wallace Center's National Good Food Network conference and within community coalitions.

3. Did you use contractors to conduct the work?

Sankofa used a third party contractor through the Wallace Foundation to develop an operational plan for the market with food safety, staffing, food procurement, and sales systems.

- 4. Have you publicized any results yet?** We have publicized the results of a research study with our LSUHSC academic partners on the impact of our Veggie Dollar program on fruit and vegetable consumption. This publication was in the November 18 issue of ISHIB. We also publicized the results of our progress on our website and review with community members during advisory and planning meetings to address challenges, as well as opportunities for growth. <https://www.facebook.com/sankofanola.org> publicizes the result of our work through pictures of market shoppers, the market experience, produce and food products, and messages about our offerings. We also distribute flyers to businesses, community organizations, and community members in the Lower Ninth Ward area.

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

We reach over 1000 Facebook followers; 500 e-newsletter recipients, 500 printed brochures distributed; and 130 direct outreach to community based spaces followers. We reach approximately 2000 stakeholders from this program.

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

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

We collected feedback from market participants of the Veggie Dollar program through a survey on its benefit to their access of fresh produce. We also collected information on the impact of the market and people's knowledge of local and seasonal produce. We evaluate the success of our program through surveys and focus groups with community members. We also have received positive feedback from farmers we purchase from and now have commitments from all of them to deliver produce to our Market, rather than us picking it up. We held a community convening during January 2017 with a follow-up planning meeting during March 2017.

ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

The majority of participants (69%) reported their produce purchases increased and 89% reported increasing their consumption of fruit and vegetables since entering the program. In terms of produce variety, 65% reported that program participation resulted in their purchase of a wider variety of fruits and vegetables. Additionally, 89% reported positive changes in their consumption

habits responding that since beginning the program and that their family was eating more fruits and vegetables. Respondents indicated that participants linked their program participation to their use of the fresh markets and to their fruit and vegetable purchases. The following are some comments from program participants:

"The Market is really beneficial because it makes it possible to us to purchase fruits and vegetables within our community - definitely a good resource to have. The vouchers also help out a lot. Gives me access to buy more fruits and vegetables so I eat more of them. Thanks to the Market I have been eating more fruits and vegetables. I am sure it's the case with other members of the community as well."

Cheryl Brickley
member, Lower 9th Ward Senior Center

"The Market provides a much needed service to the community. I love it there! Excellent service and fresh produce. I look forward to going there every week!"

Elaine Proctor
Villa St. Maurice Resident Lower 9th Ward

3. 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? No

4. 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).**

One of our major lessons learned was the significance of a community-based approach for SNAP outreach and continue ongoing promotion of the Fresh Stop Market to new customers, with customer retention and promotion of SNAP acceptance through partnership networks. Another lesson learned that would improve project efficiency is to develop a financial plan with clear goals and deliverables. We have worked with a CPA and our bookkeeper to refine our market finance system, assess our projections, and record our actuals. We are now working within a financial proforma platform to follow fixed expenses and ongoing opportunities to increase sales through diversification and volume of products. We also had positive experiences with building relationships with local farmers. We were working beyond our capacity with pickups of produce from farmers in various parts of the Greater New Orleans area during the beginning of the grant period. At this period, we are now able to accept deliveries of produce from most farmers directly at the Fresh Stop Market, our food hub site, for storage in our reefer cold storage unit located at our market site.

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

All three objectives of the project were achieved.

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:

Lessons learned are as follows:

- 1) Community planning and decision making should be key to the development of a community-based market. Build relationships with community stakeholders and ensure that the market reaches the needs of the neighborhood in which it is developed. Continue to evaluate the progress of the program and share with stakeholders. Also, involve them in marketing and promotions, so their voices are a part of the messaging.
- 2) It is important to define the market model. As we develop a sustainable market program, we have had to identify how we want to allocate resources to cover expenses. The mission of the food hub is to provide healthy food to neighborhood residents at prices that are within the reach of household incomes in the Lower Ninth Ward. Therefore, pricing has been set to meet this mission, with profit as the secondary goal.
- 3) During this project period we have identified a more efficient point of sales system to process data. We have transitioned to a single POS system that can record purchases, enable live inventory, record all sales including SNAP cards, store historical data, designate alternate payment methods, and run analyses.
- 4) The strongest lever to improving our operational efficiency is sales. A coordinated sales strategy through coordinated outreach and promotion is needed. Use targeted signage and visual language to engage customers and promote community outreach. Use cross merchandising and give staff products to focus on for sales push. The Market display and signage should emphasize the four main market priorities: healthy, fresh, affordable food rooted in and dedicated to the community.

5. 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 are increasing our impact by expanding to reach more people through sales at corner stores. In addition to expanding our market to an additional day, and increase in mobile markets, we are also restructuring our management system as well - focusing on sales, marketing, numbers and analysis of profitability. We have already built relationships with local farmers and food producers- will continue this expansion as well. We hope to double our reach of customers by

December 2018 and expand our market to an additional day. We also hope to expand the pounds of produce we offer in the community through additional market hours and sales to local corner stores

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?

Additional research is needed on the significance of affordability in fresh food consumption as fresh markets develop in low socioeconomic areas. National surveys conducted by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) indicate only 33% of adults meet the fruit and 27% meet vegetable consumption recommendations. Improving fruit and vegetable consumption among adults has become a national health priority not only in the interest of promoting basic nutritional health, but also because of the demonstrated link between their consumption and risk for chronic disease^{and} some cancers. Individual behaviors and preferences are the factors most commonly used to predict lower fruit and vegetable consumption.

One indicator that has been developed to understand access to fresh fruits and vegetables is the “food desert,” defined in the 2008 Farm Bill as “an area in the United States with limited access to affordable and nutritious food, particularly such an area composed of predominantly lower-income neighborhoods and communities.” Food deserts, and thus disparities in access to fresh fruits and vegetables, disproportionately affect ethnic and racial minority populations living in low-income communities – neighborhoods with a high concentration of minority residents have been found to have less access to supermarkets and healthy foods.

Programs should take into account how social, economic and political factors – the social determinants of health – impact fresh fruit and vegetable consumption pattern and the linkages between social determinants and fresh produce consumption. Access is considered an important factor associated with these disparities in fruit and vegetable consumption. Price point has been shown to be more important than distance in healthy food choices among residents of low-income neighborhoods. Small retail stores may have a more pronounced impact on local food access in low-income communities compared with large supermarkets as they overcome some primary barriers to access.