

**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>	October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2016
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<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Civic Works
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Expanding Local Produce Marketing and Consumption Opportunities in Baltimore
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-MD-0081
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Baltimore, MD
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$99,411

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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:** Expand Real Food Farm’s Mobile Farmers Market program to provide an additional marketing outlet to local Baltimore growers and producers.

a. **Progress Made:** We hired a Community Market and Outreach Coordinator (CMOC) in September 2014. The CMOC identified local growers and producers with sustainable growing practices and established purchasing relationships with them. We established partnerships with 19 growers, purchased food from them, and sold it to residents of East Baltimore food deserts. Partners included Shaw Orchards, Zahradka Farm, Make Ends Meat, Andy’s Eggs and Poultry, Good Dog Farm, Karma Farm, Baltimore Orchard Project, Little Gunpowder Farm, Baltimore Free Farm, Boone Street Farm, Cherry Hill Urban Garden, Food System Lab, Hidden Harvest Farm, Hillen Homestead, Strength to Love II, Tha Flower Factory, The Greener Garden, Urban Pastoral, and Whitelock Community Farm.

b. **Impact on Community:** Most of the Mobile Farmers Market partners are small local producers who primarily sell food through farmers markets. Their participation in this project provided them with additional guaranteed market outlets that they did not have to staff, making their businesses more viable and helping to further establish local urban agriculture. This project also benefitted Mobile Farmers Market customers. Although the Mobile Farmers Market was established two years before the LFPP project, it only sold fruits and vegetables grown at Civic Works’ Real Food Farm. Because there were times of year supply was low or there was not a variety of produce available, community members were not motivated to become regular customers. Selling food grown at other farms expanded the options for community members, allowing them to access local meat, eggs, flowers, and a greater variety and quantity of fruits and vegetables.

ii. **Goal/Objective 2:** Provide shared dry storage infrastructure for local Baltimore area growers to improve sales opportunities.

a. **Progress Made:** We created a dry storage unit during summer 2015 and installed an air conditioning/dehumidifier in 2016 to make the unit useable

during the summer months. We made space available in the dry storage unit for free to 7 local farms.

- b. **Impact on Community:** This has benefitted the Mobile Farmers Market program because we have been able to purchase items like potatoes and winter squash in bulk from partner farms and store them for a longer period of time, improving the quantity and variety of produce available. This has also benefitted local producers who now have space to store their food longer, dry herbs and cure garlic, and sell to Baltimore residents throughout the year.

**iii. Goal/Objective 3:** Increase the variety, selection, and quantity of fresh, local produce available to Baltimore City residents via the Mobile Farmers Market

- a. **Progress Made:** We developed a diverse list of seasonal produce available among growers in the Baltimore area so that we would know how diverse our Mobile Farmers Market's produce should be and so that local producers and new farmers know what is already readily available and what new additions would benefit residents. Staff used the list to select partners and purchase food from local growers. Throughout the LFPP project, we carried 14 types of fruits and vegetables not previously sold through the Mobile Farmers Market in addition to meat, eggs, and flowers. We made sure that Mobile Farmers Market assistants were knowledgeable about the new produce and could offer preparation and cooking tips.
- b. **Impact on Community:** Many of the communities where our Mobile Farmers Market stops were held do not have many options for fresh food. And because of the limitations of Civic Works' Real Food Farm, even existing Mobile Farmers Market customers were used to a small selection of produce depending on time of year. The LFPP project allowed the Mobile Farmers Market to become more of a one-stop destination with more options. Customers were excited to try fruits and vegetables they weren't as familiar with but happy to still have the more typical options available too.

**iv. Goal/Objective 4:** Increase number of Mobile Farmers Market sites to reach more customers

- a. **Progress Made:** Civic Works met with with community groups in areas with low food access to determine market sites and develop new market partners. We established 15 regular weekly market stops and created marketing materials for the Mobile Farmers Market.
- b. **Impact on Community:** Before the LFPP project, there were a small number of several-hour long market stops. We found that increasing the number of shorter stops yielded the largest number of customers and provided better access for food desert residents. By continuing to refine and broaden our schedule and our home delivery customer

base, we saw stronger partnerships with both community partners and customers. We had more customers using our frequent shopper cards, an increased percentage of EBT/WIC sales and more partner-generated outreach for the market.

**v. Goal/Objective 5:** Track, review, and evaluate Mobile Farmers Market success to maximize program's effectiveness for internal and external use

- a. **Progress Made:** Staff compiled a complete quantitative synthesis of Mobile Farmer's Market data for its 2011 – 2015 seasons. We bought a tablet to track sales data electronically. Using the Farmer's Register App from Perigee Labs, market staff are able to see what products are selling at each stop, how many transactions, and tender types. We also created a how-to/ resource guide that we distributed locally and made available on our website as a downloadable PDF at [realfoodfarm.civicworks.com/get-food/mobile-farmers-market/](http://realfoodfarm.civicworks.com/get-food/mobile-farmers-market/). The Mobile Farmers Market Guide answers many of the typical questions we receive about how to launch a Mobile Farmers Market – what kind of vehicle to buy, what permitting is necessary, how we staff the market, a guide to selling and displaying specific types of produce, customer service tips, a daily checklist, and a sample training plan for staff.
- b. **Impact on Community:** Using a tablet and new app allow us to better track sales trends as well as individual customer habits. Having this data readily available from week to week has informed our purchasing decisions with partners and ultimately helps us better serve our customers. Real Food Farm continues to accommodate a high number of interview requests regarding the logistics of starting and running a mobile market. The Mobile Farmers Market guide serves as a shared resource for anyone looking to implement a mobile market of their own.

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, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.**

- i. **Number of direct jobs created:** 1 (Community Market and Outreach Coordinator)
- ii. **Number of jobs retained:** 3 (3 Mobile Market AmeriCorps members)
- iii. **Number of indirect jobs created:** 4 (Whitelock Farm – 1; Boone Street Farm – 1; Hidden Harvest – 1; Cherry Hill Urban Garden – 1)
- iv. **Number of markets expanded:** 4
- v. **Number of new markets established:** 15 market stops and 9 regular home delivery customers.

- vi. **Market sales increased by \$2,615.73 and 12.29%.**
  - a) We experienced a modest increase in Mobile Farmers Market sales. Analysis led us to the conclusion that we were reaching the limit of what our current model allowed us to sell through short community market stops. To ensure that sales increase and partner farmer/producers are able to sell more product, we are establishing a second Mobile Farmer's Market that will begin selling food in West Baltimore in early 2017.
- vii. **Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 18.**
  - a) We went from having one farmer/producer, Civic Works' Real Food Farm, contributing products to the Mobile Farmers Market to a total of 19 farmers/producers contributing to the Mobile Farmers Market during the 2016 market season. These producers will likely continue to contribute products for the 2017 market season.

**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 LFPP project we were able to host 87 more individual market stops than in previous years, expanding the number of people and communities reached. Our new partnerships and market strategy allowed us to improve our community partnerships and build stronger relationships with repeat customers. We made one of our outreach priorities low-income women receiving WIC vouchers and began holding Mobile Farmer Market stops outside of WIC clinics in Baltimore City.

**4. Discuss your community partnerships.**

**i. Who are your community partners?**

*Community Partners:* We work with a diverse group of community organizations to promote the Mobile Farmers Market stops and home deliveries. These groups include: Coldstream-Homestead-Montebello Community Corporation, Belair-Edison Community Association, Belair-Edison Neighborhoods, Inc., the Oliver Community, the Darley Park Community, the New Broadway East Community Association, the New South Clifton Community Association, Banner Neighborhoods Corporation, Oliver Senior Center, International Rescue Committee, Department of Social Services, The Green School, Henderson-Hopkins School, WIC Clinics, Orchard Ridge, Heritage Run, Stadium Place, Ashland Commons, Good Samaritan Senior Housing, Chase Brexton Health Care, Waverly YMCA, and the Lillian Jones Apartments.

*Sourcing Partners:* We work with local sourcing partners to provide a wide variety of items. These producers include: Shaw Orchards, Zahradka Farm, Make Ends Meat, Andy's Eggs and Poultry, Good Dog Farm, Karma Farm, Baltimore Orchard Project, Little Gunpowder Farm, Baltimore Free Farm, Boone Street Farm, Cherry Hill Urban Garden, Food System Lab, Hidden Harvest Farm, Hillen Homestead, Strength to Love II, Tha Flower Factory, The Greener Garden, Urban Pastoral, and Whitelock Community Farm.

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

The community partners have contributed by helping us identify locations for Mobile Farmers Market stops in a variety of neighborhoods throughout East Baltimore. Our sourcing partners have given us the opportunity to provide a wide variety of seasonal produce to our customers.
- ii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant?**

Both categories of community partners will continue to contribute to future results by partnering with our new West Baltimore Mobile Farmers Market, which will launch in early 2017.

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

A contractor was used to design marketing materials for the Mobile Farmers Market. We received frequent feedback about the eye-catching nature of our promotional materials, which led to more awareness of and interest in the Mobile Farmers Market.

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

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

We created a Mobile Farmers Market Guide, which was disseminated locally through Baltimore and Maryland farmer networks, in Civic Works Food and Farm email newsletter, on social media, and on the Real Food Farm website. The Mobile Farmers Market Guide answers many of the typical questions we receive about how to launch a Mobile Farmers Market – what kind of vehicle to buy, what permitting is necessary, how we staff the market, a guide to selling and displaying specific types of produce, customer service tips, a daily checklist, and a sample training plan for staff. We plan to update the guide on an annual basis. Staff have also given interviews about the Mobile Farmers Market to local media and met with college and graduate students doing research on food access.
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results?**

The results were publicized to local nonprofits, farmers, and producers, people on Real Food Farm's email newsletter list, social media followers, and students engaged in research.

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

We have reached an estimated 40 local organizations and producers, 2,923 social media users, and 3,341 email newsletter subscribers.

*\*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?**

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

Most feedback came from the logistics representative from each Mobile Farmers Market stop and from conversations with customers. Staff also conducted a number of community conversations around food justice as well as a produce preference survey.

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

Typically, feedback focused on scheduling, produce variety and payment processes. Several community members explained that transportation is a key issue for them when deciding where to shop which often results in them using the Mobile Farmers Market because it is one of the closest options. When we launched new market stops, community members were often excited about the variety of produce and that they could buy meat and eggs at the same time.

**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?**

**a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?**

During the two year LFPP project we recorded \$47,284.70 in food sales. The revenue collected from these sales has gone to support Mobile Farmers Market operations costs and pay growers/producers for the items provided to the Mobile Farmers Market.

**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).**

1) Flexibility, patience, and communication with partners was key in determining the right schedule of Mobile Farmers Market stops. It was tempting to expand quickly and add a new market stop every time a community or organization requested one. We found that a successful stop required several meetings and at least one person (usually an employee of the nonprofit, school, or business where the stop was located) who was committed to reserving space, introducing us to community members, helping us find the right time, and promoting the market. We also held some pilot stops so that the community partners

could observe what a Mobile Farmers Market stop was like and what to expect, and the staff could troubleshoot issues.

2) There were outside factors that affected Mobile Farmers Market operations. They included weather impacting available crops and customer's willingness to stand outside at the Mobile Farmers Market, and having to cancel market stops because of repairs being made to the Mobile Farmers market. We learned the importance of contingency plans. Although weather was something we could not plan around, we found that frequent communication with customers, community partners, and local growers helped them understand limitations of the growing season. While unexpected repairs to our Mobile Farmers Market resulted in us shutting down the project for a couple of weeks at a time, in the future we plan to use a pick-up truck or similar vehicle so that we can temporarily honor market stop commitments.

3) When we had to train a new Community Market and Outreach Coordinator midway through the project, we used lessons learned to improve how we trained AmeriCorps Mobile Market Assistants and offer how-to's in our Mobile Market Guide. We created a training guide with activities so that new staff would learn how to explain what the Mobile Farmers Market does, what it sells, and how it's different from a conventional store; use a step-by-step checklist to set up, operate, and shut down the Mobile Farmers Market; and utilize customer service standards. This standardization helped improve the overall quality of the project.

4) Staff experienced difficulty in balancing the demands of selling food as a business with the needs of the community and the mission of the organization. Hiring Mobile Market Assistants directly from the communities served and helping them improve their job skills takes time and may result in lower sales totals. Setting appropriate pricing and explaining to low-income community residents why the food sometimes costs more than produce at large grocery stores can be difficult, but we trained staff to communicate effectively about pricing. Using double dollars incentives paid for by a local foundation helped us meet both the needs of families who qualify for food benefits and the needs of local producers.

5) Operating shared storage resulted in some growing pains. It was ultimately a positive experience, because we helped smaller farmers extend the lives of their produce and it was convenient to have some of their inventory on-site when we purchased food from them for the Mobile Farmers Market. But organizing the shared space could be

chaotic – making sure the space was secure but still accessible for partners, keeping the space clean, maintaining separate spaces so that there was no mix-up of what food belonged to what farmer, etc. Staff time must be devoted to management of a shared storage space.

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

Project goals were achieved, although our increase in total sales was more modest than we had hoped. We learned that there was a limit to what we could accomplish with one Mobile Farmers Market. We began prioritizing the experience of existing customers and were pleased to see the amount spent per customer increased during the second year of the project. This tells us that while we were not able to hold enough markets to bring in large quantities of additional customers, the variety of produce, meat, and eggs we sold were beneficial to community residents and they began relying more on the Mobile Farmers Market as a consistent source of food.

**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:**

It's important to put together a strong team to administer a project like this. In our experience, the staff that are best in roles like Community Market and Outreach Coordinator and Farm Manager focus completely on the day-to-day operations and do not have as much time for project administration. We had to be clear about project roles and identify who was keeping sales records vs. meeting with community members vs. making arrangements if the Mobile Farmers Market was in a fender bender vs. collecting and tracking invoices from local producers for food sold. It was important to hold weekly staff meetings about the project and talk through progress and challenges. We also had to organize schedules and have plenty of back-ups who could fill in because the Mobile Farmers Market's busiest season was during the summer when many staff want to take vacation time.

**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.**

We will continue operating the Mobile Farmers Market and will continue sourcing produce, meat, and eggs from partner farmers. This project showed us that there are limitations to only having one Mobile Farmers Market vehicle, that there is need for the project in other parts of Baltimore, and that there are enough local growers and producers to stock additional markets. So in 2017 we are launching a second Mobile Farmers Market serving West Baltimore communities. We are expecting modest sales in the first year as we slowly add market stops and will create one new job.

We are awaiting the results of a food survey of our Mobile Farmers Market customers conducted by a University of Maryland Baltimore County graduate student. The pre-survey was conducted in 2014 and the post in 2016, so it should demonstrate community impacts of the LFPP project. We expect that the results of the food survey will impact future project decision-making.

**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?**

Next steps for our project will include launch of a second Mobile Farmer Market and improvement of the current Mobile Farmers Market. We are exploring new ways of improving community outreach and including more on-site activities at market stops, like nutrition activities, cooking demonstrations, live music, and more. Activities that could improve this project and similar projects would include more resources for evaluation, developing creative ways to measure community impact, further development of small urban growers to strengthen the pipeline of produce, and technology assistance for apps or other methods of communicating with customers.