

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

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2014 – September 30, 2015
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Recipient Organization Name:	Greater Portland Council of Governments
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Institutional Markets Feasibility Study
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-ME-0085
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Cumberland County, Maine
Total Awarded Budget:	\$25,000

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Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

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

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i. Goal/Objective 1: Survey Institutions

- a. Progress Made: GPCOG developed a user friendly survey instrument, working with University of Southern Maine interns and reviewing other similar tools, to determine how much, what types, and how much is spent by local institutions on local foods and other related questions. The survey was sent to over 300 local institutions including K-12 schools, hospitals, colleges/universities, churches, jails, correctional facilities, nursing homes, child care facilities and private corporations. We received 52 responses and some of these included survey responses for more than one facility. (See attached survey instrument and final report.)
- b. Impact on Community: The impact is from spurring interest and thought on local food sourcing from local institutions that are a powerful buying market. The survey results were distributed to all survey respondents, local food distributors, Advisory Team members, other project participants and interested parties thus providing much needed information on local institutions' food buying habits and wishes of local institutions that better inform the market.

ii. Goal/Objective 2: Quantify the Purchasing Power of Institutions

- a. Progress Made: The survey produced 52 respondents from local institutions which enabled us to collectively quantify their over \$28 million food budgets. Considering these institutions is a smaller subset of all institutions in Cumberland County, there is a considerable untapped market for local food growers and producers in Maine.
- b. Impact on Community: The potential impact is huge as there is a large untapped market in local institutions' food buying that can help increase the production and distribution of local foods.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Review Current/previous studies related to Maine meat and seafood:

- a. Progress Made: A detailed review of a number of previous research and studies was conducted as part of the survey development, and report writing process.
- b. Impact on Community: The impact is that it led to the creation of a comprehensive final report that serves to complement and further work and research already completed by other stakeholders in this area. Our goal was to move this process forward with new data, without any overlap with other work.

iv. Goal/Objective 4: Survey Distributors

- a. Progress Made: GPCOG met with approximately 10 different food distributors in person or on the phone in which a series of 12 questions were asked. The intent was to learn more about the challenges and opportunities distributors face in procuring local foods and whether their companies are supportive of selling local foods, etc. (See attached interview questions and summary in the final report.)
- b. Impact on Community: The impact is that the results of the distributor meetings were included in the final survey report and presented at the Food Summit providing valuable information to producers, local institutions and other stakeholders.

v. Goal/Objective 5: Convene Project Advisory Team and Meet 4 Times During Grant Period

- a. Progress Made: GPCOG established a Project Advisory Team made of up local food experts that met 4 times during the grant period. The Team provided expert advice in carrying out the grant deliverables and meeting the project objectives. One or more Team members presented at the Food Summit and several others attended the event. (See attached for meeting agendas and a description of the Team members' expected participation. There was no formal agenda for the first meeting which was held in November, 2014.)

- b. Impact on Community: The impact was that it brought a number of organizations and individuals together to think about the issue of local foods and local institutions and broadened the collaborative work in this area.

vi. Goal/Objective 6: Host Food Summit and Convene Roundtables

- a. Progress Made: On September 21st, 2015 GPCOG convened a “Local Foods to Institutions Panel Discussion and Local Foods Luncheon” aka Food Summit. The event consisted of several expert panels and a local foods luncheon prepared by the Southern Maine Community College’s culinary school which consisted entirely of local foods. The event was very well received and attended by approximately 60 people. Roundtables were convened during the luncheon portion of the event to spur discussion of additional opportunities related to increasing the amount of local foods in local institutions. (See attached for agenda and marketing emails promoting the event.)
- b. Impact on Community: The impact of this event is considerable. We brought together over 60 producers, distributors, private companies, policy folks and stakeholders that participated in a series of panel discussions, roundtables and heard the results of our local foods to institutions survey. The survey results included entirely new information that will be invaluable to producers and growers as they work to garner more of the local foods market at our many local institutions, which is gaining popularity and attention from policy makers and institutional administrators.

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: 0
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 0
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 0

- iv. Number of markets expanded: It's too soon to tell, but our work surely will help expand local foods markets in the future.
- v. Number of new markets established: 0
- vi. Market sales increased by \$insert dollars and increased by insert percentage%. There is no way for us to quantify market sales at this time, however, we expect that market sales of local foods to local institutions will increase as a result of our work.
- vii. *Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:*
 - a. Percent Increase: Unable to quantify but we expect that a large number of local farmers and producers will benefit from the project as there is now a greater awareness regionally of the availability of local foods, better information about sourcing and the desires of local institutions to source more local foods.

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?*

We expanded our customer base through contact with a number of local institutions, producers, local food distributors and private companies delivering food service.

4. *Discuss your community partnerships.*

i. *Who are your community partners?*

- a. Gulf of Maine Research Center
- b. St. Joseph's College
- c. Maine Farm and Sea Food Cooperative
- d. University of Southern Maine
- e. Growing Portland
- f. Farm Institute New England
- g. Fluid Farms
- h. City of Portland
- i. Windham Economic Development Corporation

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

a. Each partner served on our Advisory Team and provided expert advice. In addition, GMRI participated in one of the Food Summit's panels and several members attended the Food Summit.

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

The Advisory Team requested that we continue to organize meetings so that we can continue to communicate and collaborate on this important issue.

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

NO. Originally, we had planned on using a contractor and that was included in the original grant application. However, our chosen contractor got a private sector job shortly after the grant award and left GPCOG. Internal GPCOG staff carried out the project.

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

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

Yes, the results of our final report are posted on our website and were distributed directly via an email marketing tool.

ii. *To whom did you publicize the results?*

We publicized the results to all of the folks involved in this project, including the survey distribution list, distributors, Advisory Team, Food Summit participants and all of our contacts related to local foods and/or local food growers and producers throughout Maine.

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

We reached 60 stakeholders directly at the Food Summit and over 500 stakeholders via email marketing.

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

- i. Yes, we collected information and feedback in two ways. The first was through discussion and feedback of our Advisory Team on each project objective including the literature review, institutions survey, distributor survey/meetings, and the Food Summit. The second was at the Food Summit roundtables where we specifically asked for participants to discuss and list the opportunities of additional work that needs to be carried out related to the project goals.
- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? We received a lot of feedback from the Advisory Team on each of the project deliverables. They provided expert advice on where to find studies to review, how to shape the survey instrument, how to get in touch with folks at institutions, who to include in the survey distribution list, what foods to include in the survey etc. They also provided input on the design of the Food Summit and who to include in the panel discussions and the roundtables.

From the Roundtables at the Food Summit we provided “opportunity cards” for each person at each table to fill out with their ideas of additional opportunities to pursue related to getting more local foods into local institutions. Here are a few: 1) Education; there is no reason why we need to overly process Maine grown carrots. The cost of baby carrots from out of state is too high. Do taste tests of local foods in schools or other settings to market small Maine carrots as true baby carrots. Use Food Corps, SNAP, Cooperative Extensions, etc. and other existing nutrition education programs to provide education about local foods. 2) Work on getting more local foods at Maine camps. 3) There’s a big opportunity for using seconds to increase the use of local foods and eliminate food waste from the field to the grocery store. Seconds can be used for soups, sauces and other products. Now, a lot of the produce is rotting in the fields because they aren’t good enough to end up in the grocery store.

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. *Yes, \$455.54 was generated as income from this project as a result of the luncheon ticket sales. It was used to help cover the costs of food and was part of the match. The local foods luncheon helped further the objectives of the award by providing a strong example of a high quality, ALL local foods meal, showing that it IS possible and great tasting.*

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. *Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on 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).*
 - a. One lesson learned was how to strike a balance between gathering the information you need for a survey and the length and complexity of the survey instrument. In hindsight, we would have narrowed down the selection of foods and used those chosen foods as a guide rather than try to cover everything. In addition, a focus on four fruits and veggies, one meat, one fish etc. would have been easier to process the results into more meaningful data.
 - b. We also learned the importance of vetting the survey instrument with local foods experts prior to launching the survey, and that their input is invaluable.
 - c. Another lesson learned was that we should have proposed a larger budget for the survey and allowed for one-on-one follow up and interactions with a few of the larger institutions to ensure they completed the survey.

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

We achieved all of our goals and objectives.

- 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:
 - a. We learned how important an expert group of individuals and organizations, including producers and distributors, can be in helping to shape this type of work and including them from the beginning in a project like this.

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 to meet with our Advisory Team and attempt to continue the momentum we have created. In addition, on a separate project, we will work with Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) to create a professional certificate for food service directors specializing in the preparation of food at the institutional scale.

- 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?*

We recommend the creation of a profit-driven food hub here in Southern Maine, where food is aggregated from numerous growers and producers and made available, which could help drive the local foods to institutions market.