# 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 LFPP staff 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.

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| **Report Date Range:**<br>*(e.g. September 30, 2014-September 29, 2016)* | September 30, 2014 to September 30, 2016 |
| **Authorized Representative Name:** | Brian Arundel |
| **Authorized Representative Phone:** | (207) 782-3554 |
| **Authorized Representative Email:** | barundel@gsfb.org |
| **Recipient Organization Name:** | Good Shepherd Food Bank |
| **Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:** | Expansion of Mainers Feeding Mainers into Rural Border Counties |
| **Grant Agreement Number:**<br>*(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)* | 14-LFPPX-ME-0089 |
| **Year Grant was Awarded:** | 2014 |
| **Project City/State:** | Auburn, ME |
| **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: _____; Email: _____; Phone: _____

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0287. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable sex, marital status, or familial status, parental status religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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.

**Goal/Objective 1**: *Develop additional win-win food acquisition partnerships with Maine farmers operating in or adjacent to the five remote rural counties that border with Canada and have high rates of rural poverty and food insecurity.*

a. Progress Made: Since receiving the LFPP grant in 2014, we have increased farm partnerships from 2 to 20 in the target counties. Aroostook (Friends of Aroostook, Irving Farm, Farm 4 ME, LaJoie Growers, Rankin Rapids, Bonosen Farm, and McLeods Farm), Somerset (Otis/Dasher Farm, Moore Farm, Sweet Land Farm, Moody Gardens, One Drop Farm, and The Pick-Up), Franklin (Berry Fruit Farm, and Sandy River Farm), Oxford (Cooper Farms, Green Thumb, Weston Farm, and Middle Intervale Farm), and Washington (Folklore Farm and Friends of Aroostook).

b. Impact on Community: Since receiving the LFPP grant in 2014, more than 713,000 lbs. of purchased farm fresh produce was distributed directly to community food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and youth programs in the five target Border Counties, and an additional 56,000 lbs. of donated fresh farm produce was distributed as well. Over the past two years, these 20 additional farm partnerships contributed approximately $365,000 to the Maine agricultural economy in the five target areas. Grant funds predominantly supported Good Shepherd Food Bank personnel and related travel costs with regard to establishing these partnerships, and were not directed toward food purchases for distribution.

**Goal/Objective 2**: *Develop strategies and practices with these new farm partners that keep purchase costs low and also help expand our capacities to safely store, preserve and distribute produce into the critical winter months.*

a. *Progress Made*: As in 2015, we will be holding a Harvest Celebration in December for all our Mainers Feeding Mainers farm partners to celebrate milestones and to acknowledge the farmers' hard work and donations to the program. We will use that opportunity to solicit additional feedback on how the growing season fared and request that they share ideas and suggestions on how to improve the program, particularly in the northern counties.

   Friends of Aroostook has been a Mainers Feeding Mainers partner since 2012. We have continued to grow our partnership with them not only to distribute to more than 25 community food pantries in Aroostook and Washington Counties, but to also store winter crops for a longer duration so that distributions continue through the end of December. During the 2016 growing season, the farmer was able to make a few modifications with the current storage at his farm and safely store winter crops for the pantries he serves. Distributions are planned for Thanksgiving and Christmas. The farmer has more modifications ready to make for the 2017 growing season so that crops can be stored through the end of January.

   Farm 4 ME, managed by Catholic Charities in Aroostook County, continues to increase the amount they are growing at their farm. As mentioned in a previous report, Farm 4 ME grows root crops that are processed by Northern Girl and then distributed during the winter months. This method of farming has been a huge success for Aroostook County. Not only are root

vegetables being lightly processed and put into vegetable medley packages to be distributed through the critical winter months, but Northern Girl is able to employee folks from Aroostook County to get these vegetables processed. This growing season we purchased over 12,000 lbs. of beets from Farm 4 ME—more than a 50 percent increase over what we purchased last year.

Berry Fruit Farm continues to try new pilot projects with the Food Bank. Recently we asked if they would attempt to process some tomatoes and make it into sauce that would be frozen and distributed during the upcoming winter months. Over 800 lbs. of tomato sauce has been made and packaged into 16 oz. packages, which we began distributing in late fall and will continue through winter. Early signs have been extremely positive, as the sauce has moved quickly and has been very well received. Additional tomatoes have been set aside to make another batch of sauce.

Berry Fruit Farm is in the process of making more applesauce for us. We have purchased some apples from them to make into sauce, and we have had another generous donation of apples that will be processed into applesauce as well. We anticipate receiving approximately 45,000 lbs. of applesauce when the processing is complete. This would be an approximate total of 102,000 lbs. of applesauce over the past two years.

In additions to the above, the Mainers Feeding Mainers manager and assistant were able to make visits during the growing season to more than 35 of our 50 partners. Eight of those visits were with farm partners in the five target areas. These visits have helped to build stronger relationships and gives our team a chance to see the day to day operations on the farms.

b. Impact on Community: Over the past two years we have been able to purchase more than 380,000 lbs. of fresh farm produce from our farm partners in Aroostook County and distribute it out to more than 25 food pantries, soup kitchens, and youth programs. These farm partners have been able to modify their storage facilities to accept extra distributions of fresh produce in November and December. They have also been able to increase the amount of produce grown, so that funds received from Good Shepherd to purchase their crops can go toward processing winter crops for distribution to food pantries during the winter months.

   The processed applesauce and tomato sauce from Berry Fruit Farm has been a great example of how we can fill the meal gap with fresh frozen vegetables during some of the most critical months for Maine's food insecure. The applesauce stretched well through the winter months and into spring.

**Goal/Objective 3**: *Expand direct farm-to-pantry food distribution hubs in the five Border Counties*;

a. Progress Made: We have successfully expanded our farm-to-pantry model through this grant. Eleven of our 20 partners in the target areas are farm-to-pantry partners.

   Folklore in Washington County was able to increase the amount of produce he grew to help service two additional pantries. Weston Farm in Oxford County has been a food donor with Good Shepherd for several years; the grant funds enabled us to bring Weston on as a partner and purchase produce that went directly to three food pantries in his area. Sandy River Farm in Franklin County became a partner during the 2016 growing season and grew produce for two food pantries. Otis/Dasher Farm in Somerset County was able to expand and not only grow

produce for the farm stand project, but also for a pantry in their area. These are a few examples of what we have been able to achieve with our partners using the LFPP grant funds over the past two years.

b. Impact on Community: The relationship building between the farm partners and our food pantry partners has been amazing. We've seen pantry volunteers offer to go to the farm to help harvest. We've seen the farmers take the initiative and create handouts for the clients at the pantries so that they will know how to prepare a certain vegetable that they may be unfamiliar with. In addition to the relationship building, the funds spent to purchase the vegetables are invested back into the community through the farm partners, helping the Maine agricultural economy. Here are a few testimonies from our food pantries:

   "The Farmer has offered to give us whatever we need and he will donate to us whatever he does not get reimbursed for! We are so blessed thank you for making this contact!" —Sandy River Farm

   "It is a great program that is very well received by the school and community." —Folklore Farm

   "George Weston has been very receptive to phone calls and having produce ready for early pickup on the days we are open. It's win/win! Thank you!" —Weston Farm

**Goal/Objective 4**: *Pilot test two new fresh produce processing partnerships with existing processing operations trying to establish themselves in the target counties;*

a. Progress Made: Over the two years of this grant, we have been able to pilot test two different produce items with Berry Fruit Farm. As mentioned in Goal/Objective 2, we will have processed approximately 102,000 lbs. of applesauce before the end of this year. Another crop we tested with Berry Fruit Farm is tomatoes, which were cooked down with limited seasoning, put into 16 oz. packages (800 lbs.), and frozen for winter distribution.

   Through our partnership with Farm 4 ME (Catholic Charities, a Re-distribution Organization of Good Shepherd Food Bank), we have been able to help with the processing of root vegetables with Northern Girl in Van Buren. Monies paid to Farm 4 ME for beets and turnips were used to process a medley of vegetables packages that have been frozen and distributed to our food pantries located in Aroostook County last winter, with more to come this winter.

b. Impact on Community: Due to our short growing season, fresh produce isn't available during the winter months. The processed food has helped us fill the meal gap during the most critical time of the year in the five targeted areas and beyond. The processed applesauce was distributed to food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, youth programs and food mobiles. The tomato sauce is being held in our freezer and will be distributed this coming winter.

**Goal/Objective 5**: *Increase the safety and efficiencies of our perishable food transport practices and systems serving the five target Border Counties.*

a. Progress Made: Eleven of the 20 partners are either delivering the produce directly to the pantry or the pantry is making arrangements for the produce to be picked up at the farm. This model helps alleviate the challenges of cold storage that most pantries deal with. In most cases

the produce is being received and distributed the same day. Several of the pantries in the five targeted areas are able to safely store root crops for an extended amount of time which is helpful. For the farm partners whose vegetables are going to one of our two warehouses, we are able to safely store the produce and extend the life of produce. Our new storage units in Auburn allow us to store potatoes, apples, cabbage and carrots into early spring.

b. Impact on Community: The recipients of the fresh farm vegetables are receiving quality produce from a local farmer; as a result, many of the clients we serve have shared that they don't use their SNAP benefits or any extra cash on vegetables, which are more expensive. Through our farm partnerships, we are making sure that the recipients have the opportunity to receive fresh produce at no cost to them.

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: 0
   ii. Number of jobs retained: 2 GSFB staff
   iii. Number of indirect jobs created: unknown; among the 20 farm partners who benefited from this project, we suspect but have not confirmed additional labor was contracted and much was retained. For example, see feedback below from Berry Fruit Farm.
   iv. Number of markets expanded: 20
   v. Number of new markets established: 20
   vi. Market sales increased by $n/a and increased by n/a%.
   vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 20
      a. Percent Increase: 900%

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?

   Over the two year period of this grant, more than 10,000 lbs. of fresh farm produce moved through the "Food 4 All Farm Stands" that were held in two of the five targeted areas. The farms stands have been a unique approach to help reach low income/low access populations with farm fresh produce at a much reduced cost. This project will run for one more year under Good Shepherd Food Bank.

   Friends of Aroostook continues to supply two pantries who serve the Native American community in Washington County.

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

      Aroostook County: Friends of Aroostook, Irving Farm, Farm 4 ME, LaJoie Growers, Rankin Rapids, Bonosen Farm, and McLeods Farm;
      Somerset County: Otis/Dasher Farm, Moore Farm, Sweet Land Farm, Moody Gardens, One Drop Farm, and The Pick-Up;
      Franklin County: Berry Fruit Farm, and Sandy River Farm;

Oxford County: Cooper Farms, Green Thumb, Weston Farm, and Middle Intervale Farm; Washington County: Folklore Farm; Friends of Aroostook (partial coverage)

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

The farm partners have provided much needed farm fresh produce as well as processed produce to our food pantries at a reduced price. The produce has been distributed during the growing seasons and processed/winter crops have been stored and distributed during the winter months. The new partnerships formed have been in areas that are underserved and have the lowest access to nutritious food.

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

The relationships we have with our current partners is strong and we will continue to build on that foundation by involving them with possible opportunities to expand their businesses as well as soliciting their input on strategic planning for the program when possible.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? No

6. Have you publicized any results yet? No
   i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
   ii. To whom did you publicize the results?
   iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?
   i. If so, how did you collect the information?

   Through surveys and verbal solicitation, more of which is planned in December.

   ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

   The project director and assistant conducted a survey of agency partners who received distributions from our farm partners. The responses were overwhelmingly positive. A few are included below.

   *"It is a great program that is very well received by the school and community."*

   *"George Weston has been very receptive to phone calls and having produce ready for early pickup on the days we are open. It's win/win! Thank you!"*

   *"Having relationships with our local farmers is an important part of the benefits of MFM. Some of our farmers deliver directly to us. They also donate because of our relationships."*

   *"Our patrons love the fresh produce we can now offer."*

   *"Our families are so thrilled to see the freshly picked and cleaned produce that comes from our farmer. We have used the recipes Good Shepherd has given us and some of our clients have brought in their recipes or ideas to share."*

We also often have received positive feedback verbally directly from farmers, as well as occasional written comments, such as the one below from Berry Fruit Farm, which we shared on our Facebook page.

*"It was because of Mainers Feeding Mainers that we were able to keep our employees employed and pay the bills through the long Maine winter months making applesauce," shares Joel. "We thank Good Shepherd Food Bank from the bottom of our hearts!"*

Berry Fruit Farm had also participated in our applesauce processing pilot, in which they processed 7,500 lbs. of applesauce that was frozen and distributed. The project generated the following feedback from the Lisbon Area Christian Outreach food pantry.

*We received the applesauce that the Gilbert's made on our food mobile last Tuesday and clients have come back with such wonderful comments about how good it is. We will talk to our board about ordering it instead of the canned applesauce for a while, since we have freezer space. The Gilberts are an amazing couple to put such an effort into helping other people. Thank you all again for this wonderful program. — Carol Day, co-director*

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? No.
        a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

For the length of the grant period, grant funds were applied toward reimbursements for salaries and benefits for two positions: 33 percent time for the Project Director, and for a newly hired project staff support person. Additional grant funds were applied toward purchases for fresh produce processing partnerships, as well as travel costs, including project outreach, conferences, and meetings with farm partners in border counties.

During the final six-month period, grant funds were applied toward personnel ($20,643.21) and pilot processing contracts ($4,775.63; see Goal 4). The most recent processing involved making additional applesauce and processing tomatoes into tomato sauce.

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).

    When looking for new farm partners it can be difficult to find a listing of possible farms in Maine. There are some listings found at organizations such as Maine Farmland Trust, MOFGA and Get Real, Get Maine. We found that these listings aren't kept up to date. We found that talking to our current partners was more helpful in locating possible new partners. Another lesson learned when trying to increase partnerships is that it can be helpful to coordinate a meeting site and invite the agricultural community to come and

learn more about the program. This allowed us a platform to share the program in a group setting which is less intimating for some, but it also gave us the opportunity to talk one on one with individuals that were interested.

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

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.

Research the demographics before beginning the project. Getting to know the community and the people in the community often helps in the success of the project.

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 LFPP grant has helped us lay a reliable foundation for local food sourcing and distribution in the five border counties. For the 2017 growing season we plan on adding 10 new farm partners to our program, and some of those partners will be within the five border counties. We also plan on increasing the amount of produce we purchase from our current partners, which could provide many benefits for them, including helping them financially and give them an opportunity to grow a wider variety of crops, which could open up new markets. It could also possibly keep farm workers employed longer, or offer an opportunity to increase their labor force. For Good Shepherd Food Bank, this means we will be able to provide more farm fresh produce for those we serve and help end hunger in Maine.

The food-processing pilot research funded by the grant proved extremely helpful, helping us to refine ways in which we can safely and efficiently optimize storage, distribution and value of locally sourced food. As we enhance our storage and distribution facility servicing Maine's northern six counties, we have committed to efficiently utilizing additional space within the facility, including with light food processing (via collaboration or leasing of space), and communicating research findings with the Maine agricultural community.

This project reaffirms the significant role local farm partners can play in combating food insecurity while also contributing to the state economy. Increasing access to fresh, local foods enhances the wellbeing of needy residents while providing a reliable financial commitment to the farmer.

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 are continuing to work with Mainers Feeding Mainers farm partners to identify regional food distribution gaps and to recruit additional partners to help fill the gaps.

Lack of adequate processing facilities has proved to be a significant hurdle in Maine food systems, and by safely extending shelf life of vegetables as well as enhancing the value of stored food, our two pilot projects helped us refine our methods for how best to address this obstacle moving forward.

Good Shepherd Food Bank intends to continue expanding Mainers Feeding Mainers, from 32 farm partners in 2015 to 50 today and 80 in 2019. We will aggressively pursue partnerships in the five border counties, where opportunities remain for expanding the program by recruiting additional farm partners and pursing access to pantries located in more rural areas that are as yet unaffiliated with local farmers. We will continue to grow the farm-to-pantry program to ensure that all of our food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and youth programs have farm fresh vegetables: this offers a significant step toward our goal of filling the meal gaps in Maine.

An important secondary component of expanding Mainers Feeding Mainers is to help the broader community recognize the connection between nutrition and health, and conversely, the direct relationship between food insecurity and poor health. We have recently entered into discussions within Maine's northern counties to expand our Community Health and Hunger program, which addresses the fundamental relationship between poor health and chronic hunger by seeking to integrate health care and emergency food delivery to low-income and food-insecure Mainers. The initiative empowers healthcare providers to increase access to healthy food for patients identified as food insecure, and builds capacity of community-based hunger-relief programs to provide consistently available healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables. We have committed to collaborating with community health centers to establish four new partnerships in the region, to conduct food insecurity screenings with their patients and, if needed, execute a referral to the local food pantry (which is supplied with produce via Mainers Feeding Mainers). By providing the fresh produce, the Mainers Feeding Mainers farm partners will play a vital role in the wellbeing of local residents.