

**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 also a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to your assigned grant specialist to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-720-0300

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

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2015 through September 30, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Rosalind N. Brooks
Authorized Representative Phone:	702-636-4152
Authorized Representative Email:	contact@vegasroots.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Together We Can
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	The Veggie Buck Truck
Grant Agreement Number:	15-LFPP-NV-0143
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Las Vegas, NV
Total Awarded Budget:	AMS Award \$25,000.00 Matching \$17,690.00

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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: _____

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: Conduct a Community Food Assessment of the program area.**

- a. Progress Made: Our Blueprint of How We Got Started:
Our Team decided on a logo for the Veggie Buck Truck (VBT) that matched the current Vegas Roots Community Garden logo, which already has great brand recognition.



We prepared a 6-question food assessment survey and conducted it over the initial 6 months of the program. The assessment reached nearly 400 persons. The questions asked included: family size, zip code, whether or not families were close to a grocery store where they could buy fresh vegetables, what kinds of vegetables they ate, how many times a day or week fresh fruits were eaten, and finally, if there was interest in a VBT. Surveying low-income community residents took place at markets close to the communities, where prepared foods high in fats and cholesterol were the primary options available. Other locations surveyed were at the local welfare offices and senior communities in the two lowest income zip codes in the city. While the results showed little to no fresh fruits and vegetables were consumed and processed junk foods were common, the possibility of a “vegetable truck” was met with more than 90% of enthusiasm. Each outreach provided an opportunity to talk about eating local and supporting a Mobile Market, which helped increase interest and the possibility of change. The VBT was met with a resounding “Yes,” and often referred to as “vegetables on wheels.”

We reached out and got buy in and support from: Our local City Councilman Ricki Barlow who serves the area, to see if there were any special zoning regulations we needed to be aware of; The Clark County Board of Commissioners who presented us with an award for all that we do in the community and connected us with the CEO of our local non-profit hospital to collaborate on future food grants to serve the low income communities, and the Southern Nevada Health Department (SNHD) to gather information regarding special health permits that may be needed. All three Government entities will support the VBT by including the mobile market concept into any

grant funding that comes their way or any monies that are available to support the program.

b. Impact on Community: The Veggie Buck Trucks impact on the community will be great. We have so many pockets of people that struggle to get fresh food and stretch their food budget. The areas most affected are in zip codes 89030 and 89106. We chose these areas because the USDA has designated those two zip codes in the Las Vegas census tracts as “food deserts.” The Mobile Market will help with both of these problems by conquering availability of fresh local grown food (bringing fresh to those areas) at an affordable price. We received a matching grant from the Health Department that will provide \$2 free for every \$5 spent. The program called, SNHD Nutrition Incentive Grant, funded with funds from Wholesome Wave encourages recipients to buy fruits and vegetables in order to stretch their food dollar to receive free fruits and veggies with every purchase. We are also equipped to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) a system which allows a recipient to transfer SNAP benefits from their EBT account to a food retailer’s account to pay for products received. We will be able to provide free fruits and veggies from Three Square, a member of Feeding America, and Southern Nevada’s only food bank that provides food assistance to residents. Three Square is poised to donate vegetables to the VBT in order to help supplement the produce available.

ii. **Goal/Objective 2: Develop a business and strategic plan assessing supply and demand.**

a. Progress Made: We have met with the local farmers who will be able to provide us with vegetables from their farm. They will sell them as close to cost as well as donated when they can. The farms are: Gilcrease Orchard; The Nevada Cooperative Extension Farm; and a few private growers who desire to meet our project needs in the community. Our strategic and business plan has been completed and has enabled us to fine tune and revise our vision. Starting out, although we wanted to supplement what we grew with other locally grown foods, we weren't envisioning using more than 50% of the produce from other outside sources. We now know that the demand for the mobile market is so great, that in order to service more of the community, we will have to reach out and reach more locally and regionally produced foods as well as a food hub called Get Fresh that we just recently got introduced to. It’s been really great to connect to more people in the local food system that we never knew existed. Southern Nevada Nonprofit Information Center (SONNPIC) gave a series of workshops at Clark County Library on non-profit business plans as well as met one-on-one giving their expertise about the structure of our plan. What we found was the VBT only needs 3 people versus the 6 people we thought it might need. Although the request for the mobile truck concept is greater than we anticipated, we have settled on 89030 and 89106 zip codes that are in the lowest income areas with the greatest need. As we grow and our able to sustain ourselves and have enough produce to serve the initial markets, we will slowly expand to cover other areas. We will continuously look to leverage funds and

resources that will enable the truck to sustain itself long-term even if grant funds are limited.

b. Impact on Community: This project will bring together farmers and other community partners who will be working together in order to supply fresh produce to those areas in need. Our local agencies, such as the Nevada Department of Welfare, the local WIC office, Get Fresh Food Hub, and faith-based organizations are also able to become a part of a locally grown movement of which is almost non-existent here in Las Vegas. The support of local agencies has been met with full commitment to its clients to reinforce the healthy options the mobile market will provide to the targeted zip codes.

iii. **Goal/Objective 3: Train Director on running a mobile market.**

a. Progress Made: The director visited Arcadia Farms in Washington, DC to volunteer on their mobile market to see exactly how it operates. This was very helpful as they are one of the leaders in this area and this is the exact model we wanted to see and intend to use. Arcadia's Mobile Markets are farm-stands-on-wheels that distribute local, sustainably produced food to underserved communities in the Washington, DC area. The training helped to realize how much organization goes into running a mobile market and was the exact model we chose for the VBT. This is the model that we will be following. The director also visited Planting Justice in Oakland, CA. The biggest lessons learned from them were the procedures and systems in place as well as the unity and togetherness of their entire organization, which provides a great space for the employees to succeed and be excited about the jobs that they do. It was also very helpful to see their very successful financial revenue model within their nonprofit organization as well as their outreach program that scans across many diverse businesses and entities. This was helpful to see how to navigate the food justice model to ensure that those most in need are provided for and supported by those running the system. Sustainable Molokai Mobile Market in Hawaii was the final destination in which we were able to research a third option for the Veggie Buck Truck that may better ensure we can effectively reach low-income communities. The lesson learned from that training visit was the ease of collaboration between so many moving parts. The growers, farmers, restaurants, schools, residents and local residents who process and make other local products such as Poi or Bread are all on board and excited about being able to supply the locals with fresh food. They have a website that enables the growers to upload what they have available for the week and the residents that can sign up, order, and buy online what they want. The food is then delivered to a central location. Seeing how the system works in action was a great experience. One thing we would like to explore is a similar, middleman type system, where we can sell the produce and local products of others who may not have a big enough platform to source it to those in need.

b. Impact on Community: Providing a mobile market as well as a traveling food hub of sorts will have a huge impact on not only the community but the producers as well. The low-income community, for the first time, will have

access to fresh fruits and vegetables and locally made products in their own neighborhood through the VBT. The truck will also impact the single producer of a local product such as granola or jam who will now have an end user for their product without traveling and paying to participate at a farmers markets.

iv. **Goal/Objective 4: Develop an educational outreach/marketing campaign.**

a. Progress Made: We attended 3 events in the low-income areas we will serve and were able to conduct surveys and interviews. Those events were the Juneteenth Celebration, the Grow Your Own Festival, and the Outdoor Nevada annual event. We produced marketing materials to educate and bring awareness about fruits and vegetables, healthy options and the VBT market debut in the community. Flyers and posters were made and distributed about the mobile market, what it is, and the benefits to SNAP and EBT clients and how to support it.

b. Impact on Community: The research, outreach, and lessons learned about other successful mobile outreach projects have created much buzz around our city in anticipation of the VBT. The proposed project was highlighted in local publications: Black Image Magazine, SEVEN and Las Vegas Weekly. Additionally, with the direct support from the faith-based community and the DWSS offices, we can more efficiently get the message to the people who need it most and enable them the additional opportunity of having fresh vegetables brought into the community or available at the local welfare and supportive services offices. We are tapping into the community where they receive benefits and get resources to provide health options.

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: 1 position from leveraged grant funds to grow food for the mobile market.
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: 1
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 5 intern positions that will work at the garden to assist with the farming and growing.
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: 1 market Vegas Roots will now expand from onsite location to a mobile market.
 - v. Number of new markets established: 1 new mobile market.
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$Not Applicable and increased by Not Applicable%.
 - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 4 will benefit.
 - a. Percent Increase: Not Applicable

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? **Not Applicable**

4. Discuss your community partnerships.
 - i. **Who are your community partners?** Southern Nevada Health District partners with a mission that aligns with what VBT wants to achieve. Mutually we agree to assess, protect, and promote the health, environment, and well being of Southern Nevada communities and residents. The district will supply recyclable canvas bags, grant funds that become available to help sustain operations and giveaways of promotional items to engage the community to be repeat participants. The Housing of Urban Development (HUD) will promote the project through their internal publications providing project information to low-income housing participants. This collaboration is critical in helping to bridge resources and food options for better health while becoming stable in community housing and home ownership. Women, Infants & Children (WIC) special supplemental nutrition program serves income eligible pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk. WIC has partnered by allowing the VBT to setup on their property. WIC foods are low in fat and high in fiber, and the VBT will provide nutritional variety of fresh fruits and vegetables to meet the participant's nutritional needs and with improved diets, minimize the incidence of low birth weight and premature births. The Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS) office locations throughout Clark County will generate information in the form of internal flyers and posters regularly to keep their clients informed of scheduled VBT visits. HUD, WIC and DWSS locations agreed to provide space in their parking lot for food demos and the pop-up VBT Farmer's Mobile Market for produce sales. All of these agencies will internally advertise the VBT in an attempt to engage and educate its clients as well as open a door to food options that will be provided by the VBT and directly influence lifetime nutrition and health behaviors.
 - ii. **How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?** The partners have brought awareness about the VBT project for healthy food options to its clients and those in need. The LFPP Project has offered us a door to see into the community and how we can implement our dreams to make the partnerships a rich resource.
 - iii. **How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant?** We have the commitment of these agencies to inspire involvement with the VBT Mobile Market operations. People are excited and will become active as volunteers to move the produce at the various locations. They will provide the advertising and outreach needed to ensure that this business model is successful.
5. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? **Not Applicable**
6. Have you publicized any results yet? * Not Applicable
 - 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?

*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).

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

- i. If so, how did you collect the information? We collected the information through surveys and interviews.
- ii. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?** The Southern Nevada Health District said that “The VBT is something the community needs,” and their CEO is “on board and willing to help in any way that they can.” The DWSS Belrose Office said that “the Veggie Buck Truck would be a great benefit to their clients, existing and future, and they will provide whatever is needed for the truck to service their three locations.” During a mockup visit to the Belrose office, we provided a small sampling of veggies from the garden, a smoothie demo and education on how to cook eggplant. The small market was met with so much enthusiasm from the staff at the DWSS office, and many said, they were “impressed by the freshness of the vegetables and surprised by the smoothie sampling and inspired by the education on cooking an eggplant, a vegetable not commonly used in the community.” Having a mockup market allowed the vision to be a clearer reality for people to see once implemented as well as ideas to best promote the VBT. The City Council mentioned the “Mobile Market” on their local government channel saying that the “Veggie Buck Truck is a welcomed project in their city.”

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? Not Applicable

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). The lessons learned were:

The biggest lessons learned were that expanding a current project in any way will take hard work and the support of many organizations in the city. It’s been very refreshing to be able to get into the offices, speak with CEOs, partner and collaborate with some of the biggest entities in our valley, just by pitching this new project. Being at the forefront of a new initiative with the mobile market will make a way for others to do so with ease. This entire year of planning and preparing has been an exciting one. Vegas Roots Community Garden was the first of its kind in Las Vegas and now the Veggie Buck Truck will be our first Mobile Market. This grant has allowed us the resources and space to explore this concept and ensure that it is a viable business that can not only sustain itself outside of grant funding, which it can, and to get the green light from our city and county entities.

Another lesson learned was that “Nothing beats a fail but a try”! If one has a desire to serve those who are underprivileged in any way then they just need to go for it. Through this process we have seen first-hand that many people are willing to help, give and

support if asked. When there is a clear plan in place, a viable reason for doing what you do, a long-term sustainable strategy, and the resources in place to get started, then there really is no end to the amount of people and organizations that will be willing to hop on board and be a part of something great and worthwhile.

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

All of our goals 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:

Know exactly what it is that you want and who you want it from that can be a great resource for the potential project. For example, our biggest and most important partner would be the DWSS Welfare offices of which people on SNAP and WIC must report monthly to receive their benefits. It's important to create those MOUs and partnerships with so that we have the correct end-user for the produce sold. Also having a relationship with the City Council will ensure that any licensing and zoning issues that may be needed will properly and expeditiously get through the bureaucracy of red tape that one may have.

Also you must have a plan by which this new business can operate outside of grant funds because if it can't, then all of the hard work to implement and get the business up and running will be for nothing. Using volunteers, making sure to sell the produce at a slight increase so money can be profited, operating in the right location to be able to move the products, and having a relationship with farmers and others in the food system that can assist with getting produce for free or reduced will also ensure that a profit is made so the business can sustain. Additionally, start off small with getting only the basic things needed to run the business. There are many electronic programs and devices that can make the business run a bit smoother but save those things until the funds are there to cover it if the project has no grant funding to assist with the startup.

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 have one year of funds to operate the mobile market set aside from donations and grant funds. This will enable us to parlay what was accomplished during the grant cycle into a viable business. We will be spending the upcoming season securing value added products, location stops/calendar, and solidifying new community partnerships. Two jobs will be created to operate the truck as well as one job as our onsite farmer. We will also grow the food from our community garden in a more intensive and purposeful way

so that we may supply as much of the produce ourselves thereby reducing the operating costs even further.

- 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?

The next steps for us are to continue researching best practices and ways to keep the cost of operations low while the profit margin is higher. It is most important that this business model can sustain itself. We would also like to eventually Franchise this model out here in Las Vegas. We will be in discussions with a Tech school here in Las Vegas that has an agriculture program. Our goal is for those students to intern at the garden and on the truck to learn the ins and outs of the business including the farming/growing, as well as the marketing/outreach and financial aspects of the business. For those kids that choose not to go on to an institution of higher education and desire to become an entrepreneur, we feel that this would be a great low-startup business they can learn to run and operate successfully.

Las Vegas still has the problem of much vacant and undeveloped land. Our wish is for the graduates of the intern program to be gifted a quarter acre lot to grow food on and sell on their truck.