

Local Food Promotion Program Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by LFPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

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

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

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

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. October 1-March 31, 20XX)</i>	October 1, 2015 – September 29, 2017
Today's Date:	November 29, 2017
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Recipient Organization Name:	Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA)
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Hub on the Hill: Expanding Markets for Local Food in Rural Northern New York
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15-LFPP-NY-0027
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Saranac Lake, NY
Total Awarded Budget:	\$94,715.00

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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 and have been approved by LFPP staff, 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 toward each one and indicate the impact on the community, if any.
 - i. Goal/Objective 1: By January 2017, upgrade and certify the community kitchen at The Hub and offer co-packing services. Increase annual processing capacity from 10,000 pounds at the previous location to 50,000+ pounds in the new location.
 - a. Progress Made: Complete and in use.
 - b. Impact on Community: 40 farms supported, 24 businesses/users utilizing the equipment for local food processing, four FT, three PT and three summer jobs created.
 - ii. Goal/Objective 2: By October 2016, support farmers, entrepreneurs, and consumers with shared capacity cooled (200 ft²), frozen (400 ft²), and dry storage (500 ft²) available for rent.
 - a. Progress Made: Storage equipment complete, in use and very full. The original freezers are packed to the brim. An additional walk-in cooler and freezer were purchased and installed using grant and matching funds.
 - b. Impact on Community: 15 businesses are currently utilizing the equipment for local food storage which benefits local farms by preserving surplus product and buffering freezer meat sales.
 - iii. Goal/Objective 3: By December 2016, expand the markets reached by The Hub users to include seven schools, three groceries, and three food pantries; increase sales by 40%; increase off-season local food availability by offering products year-round and tracking winter sales.
 - a. Progress Made: Complete. Sales with seven schools including Harvest of the Month and 20,000 servings of local meat. Database of wholesale buyers regularly updated, now with 171 entries. Dak and Dill co-packer wholesale pricelist distributed to two other retail food hubs. Market Readiness implemented Nov 7, 2017 and promoted with FINYS.org. The Hub purchased a large van and refer truck for delivery with the help of a Transporting Healthy Food Grant from The Conservation Fund. Transportation radius locally up to 100 miles and as far as 285 miles for weekly deliveries to NYC. Connections continue with four grocery local stores. Visitor info center and retail store built, stocked and open for business since June 2016. Expanded to include local bulk grains and flour, ready-to-eat meals, and USDA certified meats. There is one regional hospital served by The Hub as well.
 - b. Impact on Community: Essex had no retail store for fresh, preserved or ready-to-eat items until the Hub’s retail space opened. The store is open every day and draws visitors as well as community members. In addition to frozen yogurt, a new local creamery called Farmer’s Cone has started producing and selling ice cream from the Hub. Products made at the Hub under the Dak and Dill co-packer with a 30% portion returned to the originating farms have been regularly selling out, increasing product diversity and overall sales for those farms. Many of the farms stockpile preserved products during the growing season to then sell during winter, helping maximize and balance cash flow.

- iv. Goal/Objective 4: By February 2017, develop rural processing food hub tools and by May 2017, disseminate project information regionally and nationally.
 - a. Progress Made: Complete. Community Food Hub Guide created on Trello including design tools such as kitchen schematics, equipment lists, food safety protocols and user agreements. The guide and/or its documents have been shared with 10 other regional food hub projects, Cornell Cooperative Extension, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, Food Corridor, National Good Food Network, and Tuft's NEFOOD list serve. The Hub continues to offer technical support for these projects. A total of six regional in-person meetings have been helping to promote the story of the Hub to groups looking to replicate the model with over 70 total attendees. Project promotion has occurred in regional media such as the Adirondack Life Magazine, the Sun Community News, Press Republican, North Country Living Homegrown Magazine, NCPR and Mountain Lake PBS.
 - b. Impact on Community: We received praise from several food hub projects in other states after sharing our guide. The guide has been shared with actively developing projects including Jennifer Jubin's maker hub in Lake Placid and a group from Potsdam, NY expanding their hub to include minimal processing.
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: four FT, three PT, and three summer
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: approximately 70
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: approximately 15
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: six during the period for a total of 21
 - v. Number of new markets established: total of 26
 - vi. Market sales that utilized Hub services and/or facilities since January 2016 were \$841,550 and increased by over 935% compared to 2015 totals.
 - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 40
 - a. Percent Increase: 30% during the reporting period for a total increase of 1000%
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?

The retail store is open to the public and Essex County has 12% population in poverty. It is not clear if this store or the item prices are accessible by these residents. The seven target schools served by The Hub have an average of 53% free and reduced meal eligibility.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.
- i. Who are your community partners? ANCA is partnered with The Hub on the Hill, Cornell Cooperative Extension, The Workforce Development Institute and the Adirondack Farm to School Initiative.
 - ii. How have they contributed to the results you've already achieved? Hub on the Hill staff have substantially contributed to objective 1, 2, 3 and 4. Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) has contributed a \$2,000 cash match for Hub staff education and conducted an initial FSMA workshop along with direct technical assistance for food safety planning. CCE has also facilitated market connections for objective 3. The Adirondack Farm to

School Initiative organized with over seven school districts to help develop cooperative local food purchasing, processing, and delivery through The Hub.

- iii. How will they contribute to future results? The Hub on the Hill will continue to help with marketing products produced at The Hub and area farmers, meet with other food hub projects, share resources, and participate in knowledge dissemination. Cornell Cooperative Extension will continue helping develop a food safety plan.
5. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contributed to the results of the LFPP project? n/a
6. Have you publicized any results yet? Yes
- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? Press releases announcing The Conservation Fund Healthy Food Transportation Grant, ANCA newsletter, as well as all the coverage in Adirondack Life Magazine, Sun Community News, Press Republican, North Country Living magazine, NCPR, and Mountain Lake PBS.
 - ii. To whom did you publicize the results? Local/regional news outlets, published by Northern Exploring Magazine, Adirondack Explorer Magazine, North Country Living Homegrown Magazine, Sun Community News, Press Republican, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and NYS Agriculture and Markets.
 - iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? Circulation over 300,000
7. Have you collected any feedback thus far about your work? Not in any systematic way.
- i. If so, how did you collect the information? Anecdotal comments
 - ii. What feedback have you collected thus far (specific comments)? The Hub feedback has been very positive and inspiring as a model for other communities discussing whether a similar facility would be a benefit. The impacts of this project have extended well beyond the footprint of The Hub itself through the regional meetings and resource guide supported by this grant. Further, we've identified farmer interest in distribution and Group GAP components through The Hub with progress including refrigerated truck deliveries.

Praise for the Community Food Hub Guide:

"This is the most complete food hub document I have seen. Thank you"

"Thank you - I've started to use Trello myself - this is an innovative use!!"

"This is magnificent. Thank you so much for sharing"

8. Budget Summary:
- i. Were there revisions to the budget during the reporting period? (As a reminder, budget changes that are substantive (e.g. changes in line items or amounts that exceed 20% of the original request) must be submitted via separate documentation by contacting LFPP staff. Changes indicated below are not approved until you have obtained prior approval.) Yes
 - a. If so, briefly describe the reasoning if the budget line item changed by more than 20%: Between April and September we made a revision for the travel line with \$440.18 within the line from general project outreach to promotion and marketing; wholesale buyers. Another revision was made to the promotion line

(other) to combine two sub-lines into a single \$7,500 line with the narrative "Advertising, Promotion, and Materials for The Hub and the surrounding Local Food Community." Both revisions were made based on the needs of the project to best promote and support the wholesale activities of The Hub and the local farming community.

- b. Provide the date that LFPP staff provided prior approval for the revisions of a budget line item that changed by more than 20%, if applicable: Neither line changed by more than 20%. These changes were approved on August 25, 2017 and September 16, 2017 respectively.
- c. 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:
- d. Did the project generate any income? No
If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

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).

ANCA and The Hub are thrilled to work together in the creation of new services, markets and promotion opportunities for local food in our region. Support from this grant funding has been integral in the start-up development of this project, giving it a major boost to get off the ground. The resulting new jobs, greater capacity, and increased food sales have generated significant momentum in the local food system.

Creating new infrastructure went quickly and smoothly with this funding given the organization was expanding into an existing building that was in good shape. We learned first-hand that developing efficient operating systems and new markets takes time and a lot of human capital. Once the facility was in place there was, and continues to be, a need for additional financial investment for this human capital. Our project included funds for the human capital during this phase of growth which proved to be invaluable. While sustaining these staff and growth of existing services on its own, additional funding needs are approaching. The next stage of growth in services for The Hub is a highly efficient ordering and distribution system serving area farmers.

The number of users and diverse production in the kitchen has quickly maximized the space such that a kitchen expansion is also needed. Assessing and re-assessing the scale of the space and diversity of services is a constant process, ensuring the growth of the organization is matched with the needs of the community and helping galvanize these expansions for long-term stability. Overall, the shared services provided through The Hub have saved money and removed barriers for the small food businesses utilizing the space who would not have otherwise been able to access the equipment or markets on their own.

As The Hub continues to grow, we are constantly learning. Navigating scale and developing systems have been a real learning curve along the way. The need for a

processing kitchen in our area and the benefits for farmers to add value to their products and increase their markets was apparent from the start. We discovered the need for climate controlled storage by area producers and quickly ran out of space. During the course of the grant The Hub expanded their refrigeration and freezing capacities, as well as dry storage facilities. Part of The Hub's role is to take excess produce from farms. A fun and interesting aspect of the work is to experiment with new products to find which ones catch on, such as dried kale sprinkles and frozen yogurt fruit & vegetable popsicles. One of the most surprising pieces of equipment The Hub uses is the commercial immersion blender – it allows for fast work of dressings, purees, and spreads. The facility now hosts a number of catering and food truck operations that expand the stretch of the food scene on different levels and to different clientele – which was also an unexpected surprise. The Hub hosted 10 food events throughout the summer, bringing in new people and exposing them to our expanding world of local food.

Things don't always go as planned. Although The Hub was excited about certain products developed, the market didn't necessarily bare the same excitement. Product creation and market testing is a continual process to identify what works and what doesn't. Hub staff are also becoming adept at trouble shooting broken equipment and realizing the reality of owning expensive equipment that needs maintenance to avoid costly breakdowns, both in terms of repair and the loss of time/output while broken.

- 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: Our administration went well. Clear roles and responsibilities with documentation as the project starts are incredibly useful. Our partnerships worked smoothly because contracts were created before the work began. Regular coordination meetings ensured we were on track and achieving our goals. This communication allowed us to adjust the activities/budget/narrative according to identified needs and challenges. One thing we would do differently is account more funding and time to cover administration and reporting.

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.

ANCA is using this project as a model for strategies and impacts to cross-pollinate other projects in northern NY such as our Drive for 25 Farm to School Grant working with 19 school districts to develop new markets for local foods, encouraging expansion of the local food system. We will continue to share the Community Food Hub Guide with interested partners and stakeholders. As mentioned above, The Hub and ANCA will

continue to consult with organizations who want to learn more about this project and bring that information to their own projects in their communities.

The Hub plan to continue their efforts – as part of their mission– to promote local food production and consumption in our region. Through outreach, classes and services they hope to expand their impact and continue to grow their organization. They will continue delivering to seven local schools, a regional hospital and dozens of retail spaces.

At the heart of it, we are formed around the spirit of collaboration, and our aim is to promote and support local farms and food makers. As a rural food hub, The Hub stands as a model of a “community-based” scale, with the goal of encouraging us all to eat the food grown by ourselves and our neighbors. The facility is not only a hub for local food and culture, but also a community space fostering creativity and shared services while cultivating our dynamic local economy.

- 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?

ANCA and The Hub will continue to leverage partnerships with organizations to help drive food system development farther and faster. While currently sustaining their staff and growth of existing services on its own, additional funding needs for The Hub are approaching. The next stage of growth in services for The Hub is a highly efficient ordering and distribution system serving area farmers.

The Hub is working on an online ordering platform, consulting with platform sales and tech agents to plan development. Cornell Cooperative Extension agents are consulting with The Hub to assess costs for a transportation service. We will continue to reach out and apply for grant funding opportunities that align with our missions. ANCA and The Hub will work with our area farmers to best realize their needs, while connecting with the community and consumers about their desires for local food. We are so excited to do the work we get to do every day. It is fulfilling and rewarding – and we hear many comments of support, inspiration and encouragement that help to move us forward.

11. Additional evaluation metrics

- i. Pounds of produce processed to date: over 300,000
- ii. Storage usage (April-Sept 2017 period)
 - a. Freezer: over 27,000 pounds
 - b. Cooler: over 10,000 pounds
 - c. Dry: over 40,000 pounds
- iii. Hub Distribution Radius: products are reaching the greater Adirondack region and some products are reaching beyond our initial estimates of 100 miles thanks to strong efforts among producers to both develop markets and cooperatively distribute in the Hudson Valley, Boston and NYC areas (up to 285 miles).