

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; 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>	April 1, 2017- September 29, 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	Narendra Varma
Authorized Representative Phone:	(503) 308-8276
Authorized Representative Email:	Narendra@ourtable.us
Recipient Organization Name:	Our Table Cooperative
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	OUR TABLE COOPERATIVE CERTIFIED LOCAL BOXES EXPANSION
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15-LFPP-OR-0039
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Sherwood, OR
Total Awarded Budget:	\$94,034.82 (\$69,970.42 Federal + \$24,064.40 match)

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.
 - Goal/Objective 1: Create a new direct marketing channel through a subscription based program called Certified Local Boxes.
 - Progress Made: Over the course of the grant period, Our Table completed 7 CSA seasons. Each season sold out, and we exceeded our revenue goals. We delivered 315 seasonal shares to an average of 12 pickup sites around the Portland-Metro region on a weekly basis.
 - Impact on Community: Throughout the grant period, 315 community members have received 4,616 boxes filled with Organic produce from the Our Table farm, plus an additional 878 items of other food/grocery products supplied by the Co-op’s producer members.
 - Goal/Objective 2: Aggregate product from up to 20 independent farmers/producers and increase producer revenues by opening new market opportunities.
 - Progress Made: Unfortunately, we unexpectedly lost two producer members during this reporting period, bringing the total number to 12. Two prior producer members went out of business, shutting down operations and were thus unable to continue supplying the co-op with products.
 - Impact on Community: Over the course of the grant period, the local food boxes drove sales of producer members’ products. We also saw an increase in the sale of these producers’ products through our farm store suggesting that as CSA customers become aware of and enjoy the producer members’ products, they are more likely to buy those products again.

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.
 - Number of direct jobs created: .32 FTE
 - Number of jobs retained: 6
 - Number of indirect jobs created: 0
 - Number of markets expanded: 7
 - Number of new markets established: 7
 - Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 12
 - Percent Increase: -2
 - Our previous CSA only consisted of produce from the Our Table farm. The Certified Local Boxes project now includes the other Producer Members of the Cooperative. However, as noted above, two of our producer members went out of business. We continue to look for new producers to fill the gaps and supply the co-op with the products they offered.

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?

- No
4. Discuss your community partnerships.
- Who are your community partners?
 - Throughout the grant period, we partnered with six businesses or organizations and six community members to serve as community pick up sites.
 - Businesses/Organizations:
 1. Clackamas County
 2. Caravan Coffee
 3. Ecotrust
 4. OCHIN
 5. Perkins & Co.
 6. W+K
 - How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?
 - The community partners have helped with both outreach and logistics. As a pick up site, they provide a space for our driver to drop produce boxes and coolers off to CSA members. Each site has a designated point person who helps coordinate member and CSA logistics as needed.
 - How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant?
 - In much of the same ways they have contributed to current results. While were not able to accomplish this during the grant period, we still plan to put effort into building community ties at our community member (individuals' homes) sites by having a CSA site party where all CSA members that pick up from that site can meet one another, share information and recipes; this will help the co-op galvanize relationships and support.
5. did you use 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?
- *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?
- No, we did not collect any feedback during this reporting period,
 - i. If so, how did you collect the information?

ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

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?
 - Yes
 - i. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?
 - Total income generated during the grant period from Certified Local Food Boxes is \$57,112. Funds were used to pay for labor and general operating expenses of the business.

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).
 - Over the course of the two-year grant period, we have seen the CSA market in general change significantly, presenting many challenges to operating a full-diet, cooperative CSA such as the one supported by this LFPP grant. While we are thankful to have cultivated a dedicated customer base who have supported our CSA for many years, we have also struggled with customer attrition. We have seen the large-scale, corporate food/grocery market shift towards being more “sustainable” and “local”. As these big companies enter the local and natural foods market, they are able to deliver food to consumers more conveniently and for less money than small scale farms such as Our Table. CSA farms are no longer just competing with other small farms, but are forced to alter their CSA model to match the consumer expectations setup by large food distribution businesses. While we did meet our sales goals throughout the grant, it was not without hardships, as we tried implementing several different methods to reduce labor and distribution costs while also supplying high quality food to our customers.
- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:

One of the objectives of this grant was to expand our Producer Member group of the Cooperative. Unfortunately, two of our existing members suddenly went out of business and we were unable to find other local businesses to fill their place. Because our Cooperative holds Producer Members to high standards (i.e. membership is limited to companies in Oregon producing organic food), we have realized the dearth of options in our local market. This both presents a problem and an opportunity for the cooperative. First, since we could not find businesses that were producing products to supplement the other cooperative Producer Members, we were unfortunately unable supply our customers with those products and lost the potential revenue that could have been generated by sales of those products. However, we were able to assess the demand for those products, as customers were disappointed and vocal about losing those producer members, or not having more products to choose from.

- 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 Table experienced significant personnel changes over the course of the grant period, which made it difficult to maintain administrative consistency and efficiency. Additionally, the amount of labor that was required to pack individual custom order each week made it challenging to achieve labor efficiencies; the pack out task also became a point of contention amongst workers.

10. Future Work:

- 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.

Having completed the CSA model supported by the LFPP grant, we are currently taking the winter to assess the approach to providing our community with high quality, local groceries while also sustaining a business. While we will likely continue offering a CSA, it may be structured differently in the future in order to address/mitigate the challenges we've faced over the last several seasons. As evidenced by our community impact, total number of customers and sales of local, sustainable food, there is demand for what we are offering. We would like to take the winter months to work closely with all of stakeholders to identify the best path forward in ways that meet everyone's needs.

- 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 biggest challenge we faced in operating a full-diet, cooperative CSA was the logistics of packing and distribution. In the future, we would need to be more regimented in how we utilize labor costs. Since many other local farms we know are having similar issues, it would be nice to have identified best practices or evidence-based research to indicate how small farms can sustainably operate CSA programs in the current market.