

**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>	September 30, 2015 – March 1, 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	Susie Marshall
Authorized Representative Phone:	972-814-0928
Authorized Representative Email:	susie@grownorthtexas.org
Recipient Organization Name:	GROW North Texas
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	North Texas Food Hub Initiative
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15-LFPP-TX-0083
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Dallas, TX
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: _____

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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.
 - i. *Goal/Objective 1:* Increase sales of locally produced food purchased by restaurants and retail locations in the Dallas/Ft. Worth metro area through the food hub by at least 100%
 - a. *Progress Made:* From October through December 2015, sales through the hub equaled \$1,230. This number will serve as the baseline of sales for this project. From January 1, 2016 through March 31, 2016, sales through the hub equaled \$4,793. This number did increase in the current reporting period. Sales between April 1 and September 30 were \$12,093. In the period between October 1, 2016 and March 1, 2017, \$4,490. Across the entire project, sales totaled \$21,376 from January 1, 2016 through March 1, 2017. This represents a 1737% increase. We obviously played it very safe on the estimate for this goal.
 - b. *Impact on Community:* This increase in sales impacted 11 farm operations over the 17 months of the project. For Musgrove Family Farms, the number represents a 100% increase in sales in their mushroom sales, as Genuine Provisions provided the farm’s first sales outlet for their new operation. The Musgrove’s start-up provided 2 new jobs. The beginning of Genuine Provisions Food Hub has generated a lot of excitement and conversation among area producers in how they can adjust or increase their production to participate.
 - ii. *Goal/Objective 2:* Increase the number of buyers and the number of producers participating in the food hub by at least 100%
 - a. *Progress Made:* The baseline for this objective was measured at the end of December 2015. Four producers were participating in the hub and four buyers were purchasing. By March 1, 2017, 23 buyers were participating and 31 producers were registered to post products to sell. These numbers represent a 475% increase in the number of buyers participating and a 675% increase in producers participating.
 - b. *Impact on Community:* As the availability of local foods continues to be increase and as chefs realize the ease of obtaining these items, sales through the hub will continue to increase. The presence of Genuine Provisions is definitely shifting the landscape for both producers and buyers. The full impact is yet to be seen, but the momentum continues to build as seen by the increase in numbers.
 - iii. *Goal/Objective 3:* Increase producer wholesale revenue 20%-100% from the start of the grant period.
 - a. *Progress Made:* Two producers have increased sales 100% since the start of the food hub. Both have been great partners for the hub, working with hub staff. Five additional producers indicated that their sales had increased 10%, and two producers indicated that their sales had increased approximately 2%. Progress on this goal was not as solid as planned.

really latched on to the idea of the food hub as a way to help them access more locally produced food products.

- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant? We will continue to have support from each of these partners as we move forward with our food hub project. The Dallas Farmers Market will continue to support the development and expansion of the hub as it supports a broader market opportunity for the producers who sell weekly at the farmers market, offering an easy drop point for wholesale items. Edible Dallas & Fort Worth magazine will continue to promote the market with the chefs and other advertisers that they work with as they support the development of the DFW local food system. The chefs and restaurant owners in McKinney, TX continue to show that they are going to be valuable partners in moving the hub project forward. Restaurant owner Rick Wells sees the vision of a farmer-focused distribution system that will enable his restaurants to more easily support local producers and get the best and freshest ingredients available. These connections only continue to expand.

5. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? We contracted with Animal Spirits, LLC for the writing of our food hub business plan. This is a father-son team of bankers and small business consultants who have been active in the Slow Money and social entrepreneurship movements. They already understood much of the local food movement structure already, so the transition to understanding the food hub was easy. Having someone else who has the knowledge and tools to create the financial projections has been a tremendous help to the food hub staff! Our brains don't work in quite that way. Now we have a plan to use and adapt, and we have business consultants that we can go back to when we need further assistance...

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

We have not yet publicized the results of the project yet. An article is forthcoming that will be posted on our website, social media, and may be featured in the local Edible magazine.

- 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?

A survey of participants was collected at the end of 2016. The feedback was mostly positive in terms of the availability of the hub and the potential of the project. Restaurants reported the desire to have delivery service, as this lack was inhibiting them from ordering more often. Producers are excited about the opportunity, but they reported still needing to better understand what to grow to meet the restaurant needs as well as assistance in scaling up their operations.

- i. If so, how did you collect the information? Online survey of buyers and producers

- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? One producer commented, “I think the hub is a great idea! It’s going to really help me. I just have to figure out what to grow for it.” Other specific comments included the need for delivery to restaurants which was indicated by the majority of restaurants.

iii.

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, income was generated from the project.
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? Across the entire project, sales totaled \$21,376 from January 1, 2016 through March 1, 2017. Only about 10% was profit above the cost of goods sold. This \$2138 was used for incidental expenses for the food hub.

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).

From this project we learned several helpful things through both positive experiences and negative ones. First, we learned that we continue to have a wonderful group of farmers and ranchers to work with. The community that has developed in the North Texas area is one that is positive and supportive of each other and the development of local food infrastructure. We learned that we might have started the hub just a little too soon, or expected growth to occur faster than we should have. We also learned that the majority of the farms and ranches we have worked with are considered beginning farmers with less than 10 years’ experience. This fact meant that their production systems and farm management were not positioned to expand to add sales to the hub as quickly as we expected. Coupled with other projects that our staff were a part of, this project highlighted the lack of educational support for small, sustainable and organic farms in our region. Thus, we are developing programs that can help mitigate this problem and leveraging connections made as a result of the food hub development to help support that.

While our numbers look great in terms of percent change, we were not happy with the number of restaurants who consistently made purchases. Figuring out the balance between supply and buying tendencies has been difficult. But learning these things within the first 15 months has been good as opposed to having huge success at first and dealing with supply problems later. We are having to figure out what works for our area since we really do not have mid-scale fruit and vegetable growers in North Texas. These issues have challenged our staff to find a way to make all of the pieces fit together that works for our area.

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

This project met all of its expected goals, but we do not have the flow of regular sales we had expected. We feel we should have spent more time with chefs in in depth conversations about their purchasing habits and dollar amounts. This would have been a difficult task to achieve since most chefs do not have those numbers at hand and are hard

to pin down to a long conversation. But if we were starting again, this would be something we would spend more time on.

- 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:

We feel we did a good job on the administration of the project, though we created better systems as we went on. The spreadsheet used for reporting expenses on the grant makes a great expense tracking form. Developing a food hub from the ground up is always going to be slightly different in each location. We would recommend allowing more time than one might think necessary to have the conversations with/get feedback from both buyers and producers.

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 are committed to continuing the development of Genuine Provisions. We will be using what we have learned here, the business plan, and new community connections to develop a comprehensive plan for expansion of the food hub to a warehouse facility. The impact of this project to the local food system infrastructure can create a tangible shift in what is possible for local food producers.

We believe that in the immediate future the hub will provide 3-5 additional jobs, or more, while retaining the two created from this project. Genuine Provisions has the potential to create many, many jobs at farms and ranches in the region. The Dallas/Fort Worth area is a wide open market for local food sales with \$22 billion spent on food annually by the 2.7 million households. Just 1% of potential sales for farms and ranches is \$47 million.

During this project, new conversations have started that include expansion to restaurants in McKinney, TX on the northern edge of the DFW metroplex and new value-added projects. We also had a conversation with Café Momentum, a program for youth coming out of the juvenile detention system, about developing a facility that houses the food hub and a minimal processing operation that would employ the youth in the Café Momentum program. We feel we have started something that will have multiple benefits to the immediate community as well as very large impacts for the farmers and ranchers in the broader North Texas region.

- 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 Genuine Provisions and its staff include developing a program that supports area farmers and ranchers in growing their own operations by providing information on USDA programs and resources that are available as well as leveraging experienced producers and other farm support personnel to share knowledge and resources. Also needed is a comprehensive plan for expanding Genuine Provisions into its own warehouse and what that means for delivery systems, storage and handling of

products, and staff development. This plan should also look at the feasibility of including McKinney, TX restaurants in the hub distribution. We also have the option now to increase sales through the developing retail outlet Market Provisions located at the Dallas Farmers Market. Genuine Provisions can be a key component of ongoing food system development if these next steps are implemented and completed with diligence.