

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.

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2014 – March 31, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Andrea Bithell
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Recipient Organization Name:	North Texas Alliance of Growers
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Dallas Wholesale Chef's Market Innovation Initiative
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-TX-0161
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Dallas, TX
Total Awarded Budget:	\$87,980

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: _Susie Marshall_____; Email: __susie@grownorthtexas.org_____; Phone: __972-814-0928_____

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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: Develop focus group of chefs and producers**

- a. *Progress Made:* Grow North Texas (GNTX) created and distributed a survey for producers that resulted in over 30 responses from a variety of growers in the area. The team has also worked specifically with three chefs -Brian Luscher (The Grape Restaurant), Graham Dodds (Hibiscus), and Mark Wooten (Garden Cafe) - to develop appropriate questions for our chef survey. This survey is being used in interviews with chefs in Dallas and Fort Worth. In addition, the GNTX team has worked specifically with several producers to begin to develop the framework for the chef’s market including pricing, schedule, capacity, and communication preferences. These farms include Comeback Creek, Highway 19 Produce and Pure Land Organic. Farmers and chefs were continually consulted throughout the development of the chef’s market portal. They each continued to provide excellent consultation on the project and their feedback was very helpful in development of processes and procedures for the food hub.

- b. *Impact on Community:* The conversation around the development of the Chef’s Market ordering portal and food hub helped develop relationships between GROW North Texas and chefs as well as broadening relationships with farmers. The opportunities for expanded access to farm-fresh produce created an excitement among the chefs. They are looking forward to having increased access to local farm products.

- ii. **Goal/Objective 2: Begin conversation with Dallas Farmers Market on logistics for the Chefs Market**

- a. *Progress Made:* GNTX is in regular dialogue - at least monthly and less formal conversations more often - with Chad Julka, then farm coordinator, and Amanda Vanhoozier, market manager, at the Dallas Farmers Market (DFM) to develop a plan for the Chefs Market’s presence at the DFM. The exact location was decided by the end of the first quarter of the grant. The food hub container is located underneath the overhang of The Shed, the remaining historic produce shed of the former Dallas municipal terminal produce market.

- b. *Impact on Community:* This project has had two impacts on the community. Placement of the Chefs Market container at the DFM provided a bridge between what the DFM once was as the regional produce terminal and its new incarnation as a 21st century local farmers market. This project has also provided access to an alternative market for those farmers selling at the year round weekend retail market at the DFM. They now have the ability to sell produce to the Chefs Market, whether this is what is left after the retail market or produce they planned to bring for this opportunity.

- iii. **Goal/Objective 3: Develop framework for the Chefs Market and online portal**

a. *Progress Made:* GNTX staff worked in consultation with our chef advisors to create ordering periods, pricing policies, and timing of pick up and drop off. Many scenarios were discussed. The group decided that the ordering period would be early in the week. Producers will need to upload their available products by the end of the day Monday. Chefs will be able to order beginning early Tuesday morning through Wednesday at noon. Drop-off of farm products will be Thursday afternoon or early Friday morning. Pick-up by restaurants will be on Friday.

b. *Impact on Community:* There is negligible community impact from this objective, except for increasing the excitement and anticipation of the increased access to locally grown products. The implementation of this framework will create more of an impact.

iv. **Goal/Objective 4: Assemble advisory group of chefs and producers**

a. *Progress Made:* The small group of chefs and producers that had been in regular consultation with the GNTX staff served as the advisory group for this objective. They had the opportunity to test the online ordering portal and experience the site as a user.

b. *Impact on Community:* Again, this objective provided increased excitement about the opportunities that will be available through the online portal. This excitement also has garnered support for the project from an additional five chefs in our target population of chefs.

v. **Goal/Objective 5: Online portal development**

a. *Progress Made:* In consultation with Kahlich Internet Consulting, GNTX chose the Local Food Marketplace software platform for the online ordering portal. GNTX staff and Kahlich Internet Consulting worked with Local Food Marketplace to create and customize the online ordering system. GNTX settled on the name Genuine Provisions for the chef market food hub. The ordering portal went live on December 1, 2015. Currently, GNTX staff assists with most ordering and product posting, but more and more producers are uploading their products. Chefs are beginning to adopt the behavior change needed to add using the online portal for their ordering. A mobile version of the ordering portal is being created for use by chefs who may be ordering on the go.

b. *Impact on Community:* As of March 31, the hub has most impacted a new shiitake mushroom grower in Greenville, TX named Musgrove Farm. Musgrove is producing several hundred pounds of shiitakes each week. Genuine Provisions Food hub is supporting the promotion and sale of the mushrooms into the Dallas chef/restaurant market. Spur Farms tomatoes have also been sold via the hub. Raney Farm certified organic, pastured eggs are now being sold at 2 local retail outlets in Dallas as well as at the Dallas Farmers Market and to a Rockwall, TX hotel chef for the Sunday brunch menu. Genuine Provisions is working with two other distributors on the sale of mushrooms from Musgrove Farm and duck eggs from a Dallas Farmers Market vendor.

vi. **Goal/Objective 6: Develop operational standards for Chefs Market participating**

a. *Progress Made:* GNTX staff worked together to create the Operational standards for Genuine Provisions/ Chef's Market. There are separate sections for food hub staff, producers, and chefs/buyers. Each target audience has had an opportunity to review the manual. Already, several edits have happened.

b. *Impact on Community:* Creation of operating guidelines has enabled all involved to understand the operation of the online portal. This will enable GNTX staff to assist producers and chefs with adopting use of the ordering portal. Staff still expects to assist producers more than chefs, assuring that products are properly uploaded and available for ordering. The operational standards is the last step in making the Chef's Market food hub, Genuine Provisions, fully functional.

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, 20__). Include further explanation if necessary.

- i. Number of direct jobs created: 2
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 2
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 2
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 4
- v. Number of new markets established: 8
- vi. Market sales increased by \$6053.00 and increased by 6,000%.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 5
 - a. Percent Increase: 500%

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?

New producers are continuing to be added to the list of participants as additional Dallas chefs are coming into contact with the Chef's Market opportunity. There has been more potential for diversity on the producer side than on the customer side. Several conversations have happened involving socially disadvantaged and veteran producers. These conversations are still developing.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. *Who are your community partners?* The Dallas Farmers Market (DFM) has remained a community partner in this endeavor since the beginning. Other community partners include Spectrum Properties, Garden Café, Edible Dallas & Fort Worth Magazine, FT33 Restaurant.
- ii. *How have they contributed to the results you've already achieved?* The DFM has provided space for the Chefs Market and DFM employees have introduced GNT to producers. Spectrum Properties has been supportive in figuring placement of the Chefs Market container within part of the DFM redevelopment. Garden Café and their chef Mark Wootton have continued to support this project by providing any candid information we ask about. FT33 is one of the top farm to table restaurants in Dallas. Their interest and participation in some trial transactions is assuring acceptance and adoption by this restaurant and many others in the Dallas area.
- iii. *How will they contribute to future results?* The DFM and Spectrum Properties will continue to support the Chefs Market as it becomes established and grows. An important mutually beneficial relationship has developed between GROW North Texas and the

Dallas Farmers Market in which producers have the opportunity to have both a retail and a wholesale outlet in the same location. Edible Dallas & Fort Worth Magazine has been following the project and will help tell the story as the hub grows. Garden Café will be a valuable customer and proponent of the Chefs Market. FT33 will provide a much respected advocate for the project.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?

Grant recipient North Texas Alliance of Growers (NTXAG) contracted with GROW North Texas for this grant project. NTXAG would not have been able to complete this grant without the knowledge, expertise, and staff of GROW North Texas. Kahlich Internet Consulting has also been instrumental in helping the GNTX team select an appropriate software platform and work through the steps needed to develop a quality e-commerce portal.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

No focused, large-scale publicizing of the results has happened yet. A Facebook page has been created and a simple article is noted below. That said, Chad Julka spoke about the work of the hub at the Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association conference and at two other producer-related meetings in the Spring of 2016.

- i. *If yes, how did you publicize the results?* Genuine Provisions now has a Facebook page to enable the hub to be publically connected to restaurants using hub produce. The hub was also featured in a short article in the spring edition of Edible Dallas & Ft Worth magazine along with GNTX sister project, Market Provisions, also at the Dallas Farmers Market.
- ii. *To whom did you publicize the results?* Edible Dallas & Ft. Worth Magazine publishes 30,000 copies of its magazine each quarter. Readers are largely foodies and other local food advocates in the area.
- iii. *How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?* It is difficult to know how many stakeholders were reached, but Edible DFW Magazine publishes 30,000 copies of its quarterly editions. The Facebook page currently has a minimal 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 formal feedback has been collected. There is an iterative process that has happened as the hub has begun operations.

- i. *If so, how did you collect the information?* Information has been collected informally as the hub has begun working with producers and chefs through the portal.
- ii. *What feedback have you collected thus far (specific comments)?* The things that have come to light through informal conversations include delivery and the need for production planning. We have realized that offering a delivery option is going to be essential to the growth of the hub at a faster rate as well as long term success. Also realized is the need for production planning more quickly than expected. It was assumed at the beginning of the project that we would work with the produce available and consider production planning in years to come. However, in order to get production to a level that will benefit hub operations and meet the needs of chefs, enticing them to

participate, production planning will have to be implemented much more quickly to assure success of the hub.

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?
 - a. *If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?* The project generated \$193 of income in its first four months of operations. This money was used for miscellaneous office expenses related to the Chefs Market.

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).

Several lessons were learned from this project that helped improve our team's understanding of what is needed to create a successful food hub for chef's in the Dallas area. First, we realized that we would received better, more honest feedback if we had conversations with chefs on their time in casual conversations. They were happy to provide their thoughts and feedback, but getting them together for a group meeting was an unrealistic expectation. By speaking individually, we feel we also were able to asses that particular chef's opinions and preferences without worrying about how those opinions would be seen by other chefs. We also avoided "group think" by altering our approach to this part of the grant. A similar approach was used with farmers for similar reasons with the same positive results.

We also realized that the smaller scale producers that are growing fruits and vegetables in the North Texas area are mostly not producing enough volume above what they sell at the farmers market to be appealing as an offering on the online portal. These growers are all willing to grow for the hub and recognize the opportunity that is there, but we realized that we will need to begin production planning activities much earlier than first thought. With this strategy we will be able to increase production enough to make the chef's portal enticing to our target audience with variety, quality, and volume that they will want. The fact that the greater North Texas area has very few farms of more than 20 acres growing diversified fruits and vegetables has become very evident in this project. The need to increase size and wholesale readiness of existing farms is high on the priority list for GROW North Texas. This reality has spurred conversations about ways to quickly begin providing farm educational services to help our farmers grow their businesses.

The other lesson learned from this project is that delivery, even to restaurants within close proximity to the hub container, will be vital to gaining increased participation in the Chef's Market. Because of this realization, the GNTX team leveraged the current USDA funded project to apply for and be awarded a grant to purchase a delivery vehicle. This will greatly enhance the operations of this project and help ensure its success in the long term.

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

The Dallas Wholesale Chefs Market Innovation Initiative was able to achieve all of its goals and outcomes, though the conversations with chefs and farmers to garner feedback from them took longer than anticipated. We are pleased to be able to say that Genuine Provisions food hub is now fully operational.

- 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 found that for our small organization, using simple spreadsheets to track staff hours on tasks through the week worked really well. Also, the LFPP spreadsheet that is submitted with funding requests served as a great template to track our expenses specific to this project. We simply had our own copy in which expenses were entered bi-weekly.

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 work of this project is continuing as Genuine Provisions Food Hub. GNTX is fully committed to seeing this food hub to maturity with a dedicated staff, a small fleet of vehicles, and its own warehouse. Currently, the hub continues to gain momentum and interest from both producers and chefs. The hub's future has also recently expanded as a result of conversations with others in the community. The GNTX staff is now looking at a plan to include a processing operation that would minimally process raw vegetables for use in institutional settings. The expanded project includes an option for incorporating larger loads of surplus produce for either distribution or processing. Part of the partnership includes working with Café Momentum, a Dallas-based project that provides job training for youth coming out of juvenile facilities. Currently, this program includes a café that is staffed by teens and young adults in the program. The hub would employ these youth in the processing portion of the business, expanding opportunities for all of the groups and individuals involved. Also as a result of the food hub launch and GNTX's research and experience from this project, GNTX has been invited to be an integral distribution partner in a Dallas healthy corner store initiative set to launch in the fall of 2016. In its full iteration, Genuine Provisions has the potential to employ 10-12 FTE's across all aspects of its programs, including the processing partnership. Indirectly, the healthy corner store project will employ approximately 1.5-2 FTE's.

Impact on the agriculture production side will mean an increase in acres in production of fruits and vegetables, increased farm gate receipts, and an increased access to local food products on store shelves and in restaurants. While we don't yet have specific dollar amounts for sales increases, the hub expects to be working with 50-75 producers within the next two years. Many of these producers will be considered beginning farmers with both rural and urban production operations. Potentially, each farm could increase their workforce by 1-2 FTE's. That would equal 50-150 jobs created in the next two years. This project has also spurred on the start of farm services for participating producers. These services will include production planning with food hub growers, information

about federal and state programs available to producers, assistance with these programs, and educational opportunities to increase skills and knowledge in business management, soil health, sustainable production techniques, and other risk management topics.

This grant opportunity has provided the jump start that was needed for local food infrastructure in Dallas. Creating this project has laid the groundwork for increased local produce availability for wholesale, retail, and restaurant outlets. It seems to be raising the awareness of potential for our local/regional food system in a ripple effect. We look forward to the coming months and years as this project continues to develop.

- 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 GNTX staff is in the process of creating the logical next steps for Genuine Provisions Food Hub. There is research planned to more carefully assess the current farm capacity in the region with the goal of assessing the potential for a Dallas/Ft. Worth regional hub network. More needs to be understood about the fruit and vegetable farming landscape and potential for expansion. Other conversations include ways to leverage other funding opportunities to support farm services for food hub producers. While these are not fully formed plans at this point, general next steps have been outlined based on this initial food hub project.