

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 30, 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	Hannah Robbins
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Recipient Organization Name:	Richmond City Health District
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Richmond Healthy Corner Store Initiative (RHCSI)
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15LFPPVA0092
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Richmond, Virginia
Total Awarded Budget:	\$50,000/year = \$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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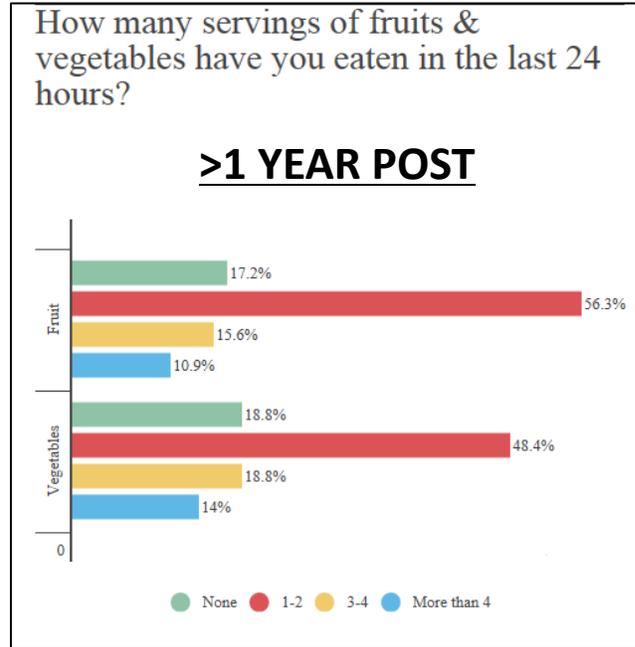
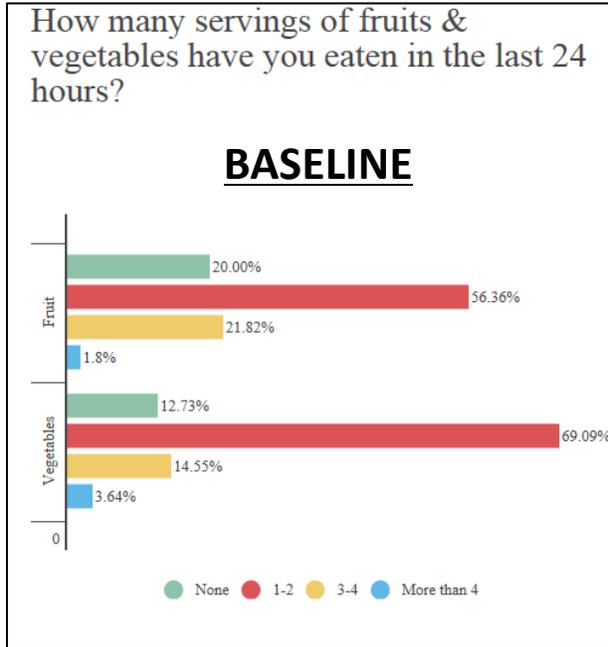
1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by LFPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

Goal #1: Increase the availability of healthy, local produce for low-income families living in food deserts within Richmond City.

- i. **Objective 1:** By September 2017 Recruit 30 corner stores in food desert areas to adopt the Healthy Corner Store program. Collaborate with key partners and store owners to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to increase storeowner capacity to sell and stock fresh produce and expand their market.
 - a. **Progress Made:** The project coordinator and program partners have completed the following activities: GIS map development to indicate high priority areas for corner store recruitment; review of existing Food Access needs assessment data, identification of 30 top priority corner stores for recruitment, on-going training of corner store staff for healthy retail techniques and technical assistance for maintenance of fresh produce. Baseline Nutrition Environment Survey collection has been completed in 10 stores to date. Currently, 8 stores have existing and active MOU’s with RHCSI. Two stores ceased their participation in the program since April because of contract violations. There has not been a consistent Healthy Retail Manager since April of 2017 so recruitment of additional stores has been challenging with limited staff capacity. Between quarter 1 and quarter 4 of this funding period the Richmond Healthy Corner Store Initiative established partner contracts with 11 stores. Partnership ceased with 3 stores because of contract violations or most commonly because the store owner opted to terminate their contract with RHCSI.
 - b. **Impact on Community:** With 8 stores currently participating in the Richmond Healthy Corner Store Initiative, fresh fruit and vegetable access has been granted to approximately 88,137 people living within 1 mile of each store cumulatively. Population numbers are based off of the 2010 US Census. An important note about this number is that some of the stores are less than 1 mile away from each other so there is some population overlap. Additionally, one of the stores is located in close proximity to a college campus which contributes to the large number of people within 1-mile radius (for accuracy purpose we assume that most of the students are not part of the low-income population that we are serving).
- ii. **Objective 2:** Expand community engagement, outreach, and marketing activities to increase awareness and demand for the Richmond Healthy Corner Store Initiative. Utilize health and nutrition education and evidence based behavior change practices to encourage consumers to purchase and consume healthy and fresh produce.
 - a. **Progress Made:** Project coordinator and program partners have successfully completed the marketing material installation in 11 stores. Stores that discontinued their participation returned all marketing materials previously installed. At least two in-store tastings and nutrition education events have occurred for each of the participating stores, however due to time constraints and limited staff capacity, they have not occurred monthly. Between October 1, 2015 September 30, 2017 program staff implemented 33 store tasting and nutrition education store-events total. Local produce has always been the featured item tasted at these events. Health screenings have occurred in 8 stores since August 2016 in partnership with the Medical Reserve Corps volunteer base. Community relationship building and promotion of RHCSI is ongoing as the Richmond City Health District facilitates the Richmond Food Access & Equity Taskforce, the Resource Center Nutrition Education & Cooking Classes, is a key stakeholder for the RVA Food Collaborative, and staffs WIC Outreach Coordinators to conduct “Healthy Food Procurement” Trainings with store staff.

b. Impact on Community: Customer survey results show that there has been a reported increase of consumption of fruits and vegetables, but most significantly after at least 1 year of store participation in the program. Our results show the difference between the baseline survey collection and the 1 Year Post survey collection:

- **5.4%** people reported eating 4+ servings of fruit and vegetables at BASELINE
- Increased to nearly **25%** people reported eating 4+ servings of fruit and vegetables at > 1 YEAR POST



iii. **Objective 3:** To test the market demand for fresh local produce in corner stores and operate as a value chain facilitator in creating a link between corner store-owners and local farmers.

a. Progress Made: Shalom Farms staff explored the possibility of sourcing locally-produced items from other farms in the region, but encountered a couple of barriers in making successful connections directly between local farms and producers. The major challenges in directly connecting farmers and corner stores include price, availability of popular items, and a lack of interest in building out this retail option. The market price point for many locally grown items was higher than the average prices for corner stores, which became a barrier in working with farms that didn't already have lower wholesale price points or flexibility to bring the sale price closer to store averages. Availability from local farms was also an additional consideration—working with farms to ensure the needed volume, figuring out a day that worked to get the produce from the farm to the store, and ensuring needed packaging to keep produce food safe were often outside of normal practice for many market farmers. Overall, this avenue seemed to not generate enough revenue on a small scale to garner enough interest from local producers.

Impact on Community: Not applicable

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: 1 FTE job, and 1 PTE
 - a. Healthy Retail Manager
 - b. Healthy Retail Specialist
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 6

- a. Healthy Retail Manager at Shalom Farms (FTE)
 - b. Healthy Retail Specialist at Shalom Farms (PTE)
 - c. Project Coordinator at Richmond City Health District
 - d. Executive Director at Shalom Farms
 - e. Food Access & Equity Specialist at Richmond City Health District
 - f. Produce Aggregation Specialist at Rudy's Exotic Mushrooms
 - g. Farmer at Shalom Farms
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 0
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: 7 markets (James Food Store, Hopkins Store, Stop & Go, Davis Market, RS Express, Food Circus, College Mart, 7 Heaven); the variety and quantity of fresh and local produce was increased in 6 different store locations as a result of program implementation
 - v. Number of new markets established: 4 markets (Sunoco Food Mart, 701 Express, and North Ave Market & Deli, and Citgo Quickstop); availability of fresh local produce was established in 4 different store locations as a result of program implementation
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$1,447 and increased by 8%.
 - a. Grant year 1 total produce sales: \$16,703.32
 - b. Grant year 2 total produce sales: \$18,150.58
 - c. Grant year 1 total **local produce** sales: \$1,481
 - d. Grant year 2 total **local produce** sales: \$741.41
 - e. Quarter 4 total **local produce** sales: \$406.20
 - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 3 local farms/producers (Shalom Farms, Rudy's Exotic Mushrooms, and a Virginia Apple producer.)
 - viii. Percent Increase: 300% increase in produce distributor beneficiaries. Before the RHCSI all of these producers were already in business, however once the RHCSI was established all three of the listed producers were able to directly benefit from produce sales in the corner stores.

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?** It is difficult to say at this point whether we have yet reached any new populations. Each healthy store is located in an underserved, low income neighborhood. The Richmond Healthy Corner Store Initiative is committed to targeting low income Latino/Hispanic neighborhoods in the City of Richmond, and we have begun the conversation of recruitment with three different Spanish-speaking store owners. Additionally, we have also produced printed marketing materials translated in Spanish in anticipation of working with these stores. The only store participating in RHCSI that is located in a neighborhood with a predominant Spanish-speaking customer population is James Market, in Richmond's south side.

4. **Discuss your community partnerships.**

- i. **Who are your community partners?** Shalom Farms is the primary program partner as they implement all produce deliveries and conduct regular communication with the store-owners and store staff. Other community partners include Rudy's Exotic Mushroom and Produce, Medical Reserve Corps, Richmond City Council, the Richmond Food Access & Equity Taskforce, Community Resource Centers, Richmond Redevelopment Housing Authority (RRHA), Walgreens Flu Clinic, and Code for RVA; a local civic hacking group dedicated to increasing efficiency of government programs using online platforms.
- ii. **How have they contributed to the results you've already achieved?** Without the partnership of Shalom Farms there would not be a RHCSI. Shalom Farms is able to provide the local produce sold in the stores. They make two weekly deliveries to stores that require it, and they aggregate all non-local produce that is sold in the stores from Rudy's Exotic Mushrooms and Produce. The Medical Reserve Corps provides the volunteer base to staff the in-store health screenings and maintain the role as primary facilitator of connection to care for clientele they interact with. The Richmond City Council is a partner in that they are able to promote the Healthy Corner Store locations within each individual city council district and provide funding to the Richmond City Health District to pay for some of the Project Coordinator's salary. Community Resource Centers are located strategically in low-income and underserved pockets of the

city; the staff members in these locations are huge supporters of the RHCSI and send clients regularly to buy fresh produce at participating stores. We also conduct nutrition education with the Resource Centers and use that opportunity as a way to connect customers to healthy food access points. RRHA has worked with RHCSI to determine feasible target stores for recruitment. Last year, a RRHA staff member helped convince a skeptical store owner to join the program because she is a respected member of the community and effectively communicated the dire need for produce quality improvement for one of the only food stores in the neighborhood. Walgreens Flu Clinic provided free flu shots in the fall of 2016 at all store outreach events.

- iii. **How will they contribute to future results?** We continually rely on our partnerships with Resource Centers and the RRHA to assist in the recruitment of more convenience stores into the program. Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) has agreed to help staff all future store events to provide blood-pressure screenings, pre-diabetes assessments, and connect customers to clinical care. MRC's partnership and dedication will help give the public a greater sense of credibility to the program because of its added public-health component. The other existing community partnerships will greatly contribute to the successful expansion of the RHCSI. With the help of these organizations, we can reach a greater number of community members, initiate a stronger demand in the community for local produce, and continue the progress that has been made thus far.

5. **Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?** The Project Coordinator (PC) at Richmond City Health District went from being a full-time contractor to a salaried employee for Virginia Department of Health in February 2017. The PC continues to conduct all administrative and evaluation work for the Richmond Healthy Corner Store Initiative. Her position provides support for the Shalom Farms project coordinator. The PC maintains communication with the Shalom Farms PC, Virginia Department of Health evaluators, all program vendors and partners, and communicates with any interested community stakeholders. Monthly contributions to the results achieved thus far include input and reporting of all sales and produce quantities delivered to each store, marketing materials maintenance and inventory, and ensuring that all program criteria are met per individual store.

6. **Have you publicized any results yet?*** Yes

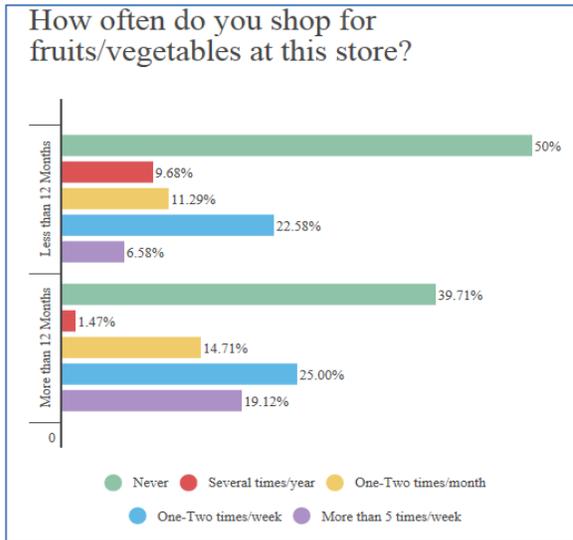
- i. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?** The PC from Richmond City Health District and the Healthy Retail Specialist from Shalom Farms presented the results of the program at a statewide conference "Weight of The State" in April 2017. To whom did you publicize the results?
- ii. **How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?** There were approximately 40 people reached in the audience, with about 15 different organizations being represented among that audience.

*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 conduct customer survey collection as a baseline measurement and as a post-intervention measurement after a minimum of 3 months of programming throughout the duration of the store's participation in RHCSI. Storeowner feedback is also collected on an informal basis, through regular communication with the owner/store staff on delivery days.
- ii. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?** Customer feedback includes variation of dialogue ranging from lack of knowledge about the program inside the store to overwhelming satisfaction and appreciation for the program in the community. A lot of feedback is provided on what type of produce items customers would like to purchase from the store. Fruit items such as bananas, melons, berries, apples, oranges, etc. are requested through surveys often. Local produce that has been requested from the customer base includes items such as cabbage, collards, onions, sweet potatoes, and kale. Since implementation of the RHCSI, every storeowner reports satisfaction with the program staff, the produce delivery service, and fridge display maintenance. There have been minimal but existing instances where a storeowner has reported dissatisfaction with the lag in sales of the produce items. Additionally,

customers are asked about their shopping and consumption habits regarding fresh produce from the stores. In two years we have seen positive results showing a significant increase in purchasing of fruits and vegetables from the store, and a significant increase in the number of reported servings of vegetables consumed in the last 24 hours. The survey data shown in this report is from three surveys; a “Baseline” survey, a “Less than 12 Month” survey and the other a “More than 12 Month” survey. A “Less than 12 Month” survey regards a store participating in the program anywhere from 3-11 months. We collect these surveys in stores throughout the years so once a store has been in the program for at least 12 months we begin tracking customer feedback in that store using the “More than 12 Month” survey. Examples of specific customer survey results include the following:



- Note the nearly 13% increase in number of customers reporting they shop 5+ times/week for fruits and vegetables at the store
- Note the 11% decrease in number of customers who report “never” shopping here for fruits and vegetables

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. **Total amount spent during reporting period:**

Personnel:	\$24,632.85
Contractual:	\$0.00
Equipment Purchases:	\$0.00
Travel:	\$998.76
Supplies:	\$218.44
Other:	\$0.00
Indirect Costs:	\$0.00
TOTAL:	\$25,850.05

iii. **Amount of matching funds/in-kind contributions used during the reporting period:** \$29,820

iv. **Did the project generate any income?** Not applicable

a. 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).**

Marketing Materials: The RHCSI used branding and designs from the Philadelphia Food Trust Healthy Corner Store Program. We recognized that the bright colors and overall look of the materials were

culturally appropriate and eye-catching for our audience in corner stores. A positive lesson learned was that there is significant value to the program as a whole when branding and marketing is the same in every store. This ensures a high-quality customer experience of healthy retail which we believe establishes the program's credibility and recognition across the city. Every RHCSI store has the same fridge sign, window decal, exterior banner, price and item signage, and outreach items.

Store-Owner Reliability: We went into this project assuming that all store-owners would be immediately bought-in to the idea of selling fresh produce. What we found is that the reaction and enthusiasm varies greatly. We learned that the key to sustainability of the program is true store-owner buy-in to the idea of providing access to fresh produce in an underserved community. Without that, the owner and store staff become totally dependent on program staff to maintain the level of quality of the food and the presentation of the retail display. In general convenience store owners are difficult to work with because their schedules vary and they can rarely give prolonged attention to something that program staff is trying to communicate to them because of the nature of the business they are running. Sometimes ownership of stores changes overnight, which requires an entirely new process of recruitment and relationship development to maintain the program in that store.

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

Store Recruitment: Recruitment took a lot longer than we originally expected which led to not reaching Objective #1 of recruiting 30 stores into the program. The first lesson we learned is that a store is less likely to be successful if it is selling fresh produce less than a half mile from another retail outlet selling produce. We also learned to consider any other community programming happening in the targeted neighborhoods that were already focusing on healthy retail—and to be sensitive to the work already happening. Before deciding 30 stores we should have taken a more realistic assessment of viable stores that could be great partners. Unfortunately, a lot of a store's success is attributed to the store owner's attitude about the program. The more hands off they are the less likely the program will do well. Locating a store owner who met our criteria was more difficult than we thought it would be.

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:**

Organization Partnerships: The reason why we feel like the program has been so successful is because of the partnership between the Richmond City Health Department and the local nonprofit farm, Shalom Farms. Through this equal partnership, RCHD was able to provide effective evaluation of the program and proper oversight of the grant budget and reporting documents while Shalom Farms managed the actual growing, aggregating, and distributing of fresh produce to stores in food deserts in Richmond. Shalom Farms' mission of providing access to fresh produce at low cost made the inexpensive retail prices of local fresh fruits and vegetables possible. As far as administration; it wouldn't make sense for a local government agency to try to handle the above agricultural activities, so having the partnership of Shalom Farms was essential to program implementation.

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 RHCSI received a 3-year Community Food Project (CFP) Award to continue implementation and expansion of the program. The past data collected throughout the duration of the program and future data about fresh produce sales will be used to demonstrate a consumer demand for such food. This will help to make the case for a sustainable grocery store in the designated food desert neighborhoods which could have an exponential impact on the surrounding population in terms of positive health outcomes. The project will continue to fund the created position for 1 full time employee, the Healthy Retail Manager, and support partial funding for the following positions 6 positions being retained:
 - a. Healthy Retail Manager at Shalom Farms (FTE)

- b. Healthy Retail Specialist at Shalom Farms (PTE)
- c. Project Coordinator at Richmond City Health District
- d. Executive Director at Shalom Farms
- e. Food Access & Equity Specialist at Richmond City Health District
- f. Produce Aggregation Specialist at Rudy's Exotic Mushrooms
- g. Farmer at Shalom Farms

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? N/A.

Please see RHCSI pictures below:

Marketing Materials:



Community Outreach: Store Events



Local Produce Delivered and Sold in RHCSI Stores from Shalom Farms:



Healthy Retail Manager (FTE) At Work:



Before & After Store Began participating RHCSI:

