

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.

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| Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i> | September 30, 2014 – September 29, 2015 |
| Authorized Representative Name: | Laura Brown |
| Authorized Representative Phone: | 434-244-0625 |
| Authorized Representative Email: | laura@localfoodhub.org |
| Recipient Organization Name: | Local Food Hub |
| Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement: | Marketing the Value of Local Food |
| Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i> | 14-LFPPX-VA-0167 |
| Year Grant was Awarded: | 2014 |
| Project City/State: | Charlottesville, VA |
| Total Awarded Budget: | \$64,000 |

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: _____

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0287. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable sex, marital status, or familial status, parental status religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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: Further LFH re-branding effort

- a. Progress Made: *With our new logo and tagline, we updated all of our product packaging and labels, as well as signage at our warehouse and offices and on our delivery vehicles. We developed new print materials to reflect our refined brand, including a new brochure, signage and posters for community and outreach events, and developed point of sale materials for our customers to use for in-store displays. Finally, we overhauled our website and now have a modern, user-friendly website that appropriately reflects our brand and our mission. We now have farmer profiles for all of our partner farms, a map of our partner farms, and various resources that will appeal to farmers, consumers, and customers alike.*

- b. Impact on Community: *Our new logo and materials have increased our brand recognition in the community. More end-users are familiar with our product, and we’ve received positive feedback from our customers about the new logo and product labels. Our new website has enhanced our communication with our customers, donors, and supporters. The website features interactive displays that better explain our mission and how our programs operate. We have increased traffic to our website since we launched the new look and have received positive feedback from our major supporters and primary customers.*

- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Improve market penetration in institutions and schools.

- a. Progress Made: *We have developed point-of-interaction materials and shared them with our institutional customers. We have developed an internal quality assurance program have marketed it to our customers. During Virginia Farm to School week, we conducted six in-school demonstrations in six school districts (one in each district). We also partnered with City Schoolyard Garden during their Harvest of the Month Program, which introduced a seasonal, locally-sourced snack to elementary students in Charlottesville City Schools each month, and provided complementary educational information about nutrition, gardening, and home cooking.*

City Schoolyard Garden (CSG) operates a once-per-month snack program, called Harvest of the Month, in six Charlottesville City Elementary Schools. Local Food Hub works closely with CSG to identify an in-season snack item for each month, and sources the product from our partner farms. We deliver the product to Charlottesville City Schools’ central kitchen, where the snack is prepared and distributed into school-sized portions (one serving size per student). CSG volunteers distribute the products to the individual schools. Each classroom receives enough product for each of their students to try it, and are provided with materials to conduct a lesson on the product. Local Food Hub also provides information about the product, such as growing tips, and information about the farms that grew it and where it came from. CSG hosts in-garden activities related to the featured product, and provides lessons to students throughout the month in a variety of settings (some in the classroom, cafeteria, or garden).

This program provides snacks for 2,150 students each month. This is a new program for Local Food Hub and thus we have increased the consumption of local food in the community among elementary students. The students are also sent home with a backpack flyer with information about the snack item to share with family. We have heard from several parents that their students liked the snack item so much, they asked their parents to buy it for them to have at home.

We continue to work closely with food service contractors, particularly Westminster-Canterbury of the Blue Ridge, a local retirement community. This institutions orders from us on a regular, weekly basis, and orders in large volumes, which enables us to purchase more product from our larger growers.

b. Impact on Community: Some of our customers are using the point-of-interaction materials, however, they are not being as widely used as we had anticipated. During Virginia Farm to School Week, only one of the six districts we worked with used the marketing materials. We are currently researching new ideas for point-of-interaction materials or in-store marketing tactics that would appeal more to our customers.

The Harvest of the Month Program ran from January through May 2015, and September. We will continue this program in the 2015-2016 schoolyard and continue to provide the schools with locally grown food and educational materials. We continue to gain media attention for these snack programs and will expand on this exposure in the future.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Improve market penetration in retail outlets

a. Progress Made: We used the same point-of-sale materials developed for institutions as we did for retailers (see details above). We have concluded these are not the best approach to in-store marketing and are working with our customers to refine our approach.

Our original grant proposal indicated we would complete a second prototype of retail-specific product packaging in April. Earlier this year, we felt the ideal product for this prototype was a bagged lettuce or leafy greens, which would be available in the fall. However, after further consideration, discussion with our growers and with our customers, we elected to not develop a retail-specific package for leafy greens at this time. We need more time to work closely with our growers to develop a product that retailers want, and we need to work closely with our retail customers to discuss an ideal packaging format, which may vary. Next year, we hope to be able to pilot several small package varieties, such as a clear plastic bag with a sticker, bunch or twist tie, clamshell package with a sticker, etc.

b. Impact on Community: Some of our retailers are using the point-of-sale materials we developed, however, not as many as we had hoped. Many stores are using the window cling we developed for front-of-store marketing. We know these materials are not the most effective, so we will be working closely with our

customers to develop more appropriate materials or store-specific materials that better fit their individual marketing and branding needs.

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.

As discussed in our midterm report, this question is not applicable to our project. We cannot accurately report whether a job was created or retained, direct or indirect, as a result of this grant. Our farms are better suited to maintain current employees and hire as needed as the growing season continues, but this is due to a variety of factors. Anecdotally, our farms report that because of their partnership with us, they have increased overall on-farm sales, and greatly benefit from their relationship with us thanks to our Grower Services, including workshops, trainings, cost-sharing opportunities, production planning, etc.

- i. Number of direct jobs created: N/A
- ii. Number of jobs retained: N/A
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: N/A
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 5: *We have expanded markets among retailers, schools, institutions, restaurants, and buying clubs.*
- v. Number of new markets established: 1: *We piloted two direct-to-consumer programs this summer, which marked the first time Local Food Hub had sold products directly to individuals. These two partnerships arose prior to our grant application, and we did not foresee this as a business opportunity at the time of our grant application.*

Our Fresh Farmacy: Fruit and Veggie Prescription Program, is a partnership between Local Food Hub and three area health clinics in Charlottesville, VA. In the pilot program, 76 health clinic patient families were “prescribed” a biweekly supply of fresh fruits and vegetables, grown by Local Food Hub partner farms. The prescriptions also included recipes and cooking tips to encourage home cooking and develop familiarity with new foods. The program began in April 2015 and lasted through November. Due to the success of the program and positive feedback, we are working with the health clinics to expand this program into 2016.

Our Farm to Workplace Program is partnership between Local Food Hub and Crutchfield Corporation, a Charlottesville-based electronic retailer. Through Crutchfield’s Employee Wellness Program, participating employees receive a biweekly share of a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables grown by our partner farms, and the cost is shared by the corporation. Seventy-eight employees participated in this pilot, which ran from June through October 2015. Surveys by Local Food Hub and Crutchfield have demonstrated the program was successful in improving healthy eating habits and increasing familiarity of local foods and farms among employees. The program also served as an additional outlet for some of our smallest farms. We are working closely with Crutchfield to plan for the 2016 Farm to Workplace program.

- vi. Market sales increased by \$400,500 and increased by 34.5%.
 - o Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 70 (*all of our partner farms benefit from this project*)

- Percent Increase: *While our ability to purchase more product from our partner farms has aided their businesses and increased their revenue, it is not possible for us to collect data about the precise increases to farmers as a result of this grant. We increased purchasing 33.2% over the reporting period compared to the previous year, but the direct impact on farms is unknown.*

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?

Yes. This year, we began two new programs with community partners that have helped us to reach new populations, particularly low income and low access populations.

Local Food Hub has partnered with City Schoolyard Garden, a nonprofit that teaches garden education to Charlottesville elementary students, and Charlottesville City Schools on a new program, Harvest of the Month: Garden to Table Snack Program. Each month, students taste a fresh, healthy snack featuring a locally sourced food item, grown by Local Food Hub partner farms. City Schoolyard Garden prepares nutrition, garden, and culinary education to complement the snacks. Thus far, students have tasted sweet Pink Lady apples, crispy kale chips, spicy radishes, roasted asparagus, strawberries, Asian pears, broccoli, and more. City Schoolyard Garden has secured funding to expand this program the 2015 – 2017 schoolyears and has again chosen to partner with Local Food Hub for product sourcing and product information.

In April, we launched our newest effort to increase access to local food. Through the Fresh Farmacy: Fruit and Veggie Prescription Program, patients and their families at three area health clinics were “prescribed” a biweekly supply of fresh fruits, vegetables, meat, and eggs grown by our partner farms. The prescriptions included recipes and educational programs that help to encourage home cooking and develop familiarity with new foods. The recipes were graciously prepared by The PB&J Fund, a nonprofit organization that works with Charlottesville youth and their families to teach healthy cooking habits and introduce students to new foods. The recipes selected utilized products the patients received in their prescriptions, and were selected for their ease and cultural appropriateness. More than 75 families participated in this program, which aimed to lower obesity rates in our community, introduce families to new, healthful foods, and get kids and adults excited about cooking and eating. This work was supported by a state grant to the Thomas Jefferson Health District and concluded at the end of November.

Local Food Hub planed the varieties and amount of food each of the three clinics received at each drop (typically 5-8 items per drop), and coordinated delivery with the clinic sites. The clinics continue to work with their patients on a variety of health and nutrition topics, which includes promoting the consumption of fresh, local food. This program accounted for \$44,000 in sales, approximately 75% of which would not have been sold otherwise (this program helped us make \$33,000 in sales that we otherwise would not have an outlet for).

4. Discuss your community partnerships.
 - i. Who are your community partners?

City Schoolyard Garden + Charlottesville City Schools

City Schoolyard Garden is a nonprofit organization that maintains organic educational gardens for use in classroom instruction, after-school programs and summer camps, and assists in developing garden-based curriculum for use in elementary and middle school. They operate school gardens at all six of

Charlottesville City's elementary schools and one middle school. They partner with Local Food Hub to provide all students the opportunity to taste food items grown in the garden and which they learn about in the classroom. Through their Harvest of the Month Program, Local Food Hub provides a fresh, local snack each month to all students. The program seeks to encourage healthy eating habits, introduce students to new and healthful food items, and develop food literacy among students and their families.

The PB&J Fund

The PB&J Fund is a nonprofit organization that connects Charlottesville youth with the resources and knowledge necessary to help develop a healthy diet. Through cooking classes and nutrition education, the organization seeks to address kids' nutritional needs at each stage of development, and increase access to healthy meals for students and their families. Working closely with the Boys and Girls Club and local public schools, they teach classes to students from pre-K to high school, and offer family-driven courses, such as a "new moms" class. The PB&J Fund sources many of their products from Local Food Hub and utilized our resources to teach students about where their food comes from and how it was grown. This summer, the students organized a CSA program as a fundraiser for the Boys and Girls Club. The CSA bags were comprised of produce and eggs from Local Food Hub partner farms, and the students shared information with their customers about the farmers that grew the food and prepared recipes for the customers to try.

Thomas Jefferson Area Health District

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Hunger Relief Organizations: The Emergency Food Network, Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, The Haven, and others

For many Virginians who rely on food assistance programs, local foods are often out of reach. The Emergency Food Network, a volunteer-run nonprofit that helps families in short-term food crisis, is seeking to change this paradigm. They have partnered with Local Food Hub to offer a regular supply of local fruits and vegetables to their clients. Local Food Hub also donates thousands of pounds of produce each year to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, so that local food makes its way into feeding programs throughout the region. Local Food Hub also works with The Haven, a multi-purpose community space that provides resources for the homeless, including a safe place to be during the day, access to technology and resources for finding employment, and access to showers and meals. The Haven operates a central kitchen, a community garden, and a cultural and arts space. They aim to nourish their clients with healthy meals, and source many products from Local Food Hub.

- ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?

All of these organizations help us reach the most vulnerable and food-insecure populations in our community. They create a safe place for learning about food and healthy cooking habits, and have

created a community-wide dialog about how the community feeds itself. They help us to operate programs that we otherwise would not have capacity to do ourselves.

- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant?

These groups will help us to continue to increase access to fresh, local food for all segments of our community. We will continue to partner with them in 2016 and beyond to build on our collaborative efforts and to increase our reach and enhance our services.

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

We work with a local advertising agency, Payne Ross and Associates. They developed our new logo and helped us rebrand our organization last year. They have been instrumental in helping us to further our presence in the community and to create new materials as necessary. They are very passionate about our mission and have provided many services to us at reduced rates. We are grateful for this relationship and will continue to work with them on marketing materials and community outreach. Without them, we would not have been able to develop the high-quality, professional materials we now have available to our customers and to use at outreach events.

- 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?
 - i. If so, how did you collect the information?

Through informal conversations, we have solicited feedback from our customers. Some of our most engaged customers have been very willing to share how they are utilizing the in-store materials.

- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

Several of our retail customers have found the point of sale materials and window clings to be very helpful in communicating to customers about the types of products offered in their shop, and their commitment to supporting our local food system. Some customers wished for the point of sale cards to be larger, while others wished for them to be smaller. Overall, many are not using our materials. We aim to partner with a diverse group of 2-3 customers in 2016 to identify best practices in in-store marketing and learn how we can better serve our customers with more appropriate materials.

- 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?

Local Food Hub has experienced positive growth over the course of this grant period and has acquired new customers, due in part to our new marketing materials and outreach to the community. This has generated new income from our customers, which we use to pay our growers and operate our programs and services. However, this is difficult to measure as our customer growth is seasonal (we lose customers in the winter when we do not have much product available, and gain many customers during the growing season) and could be due to a variety of factors.

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).

As discussed, we have learned that our printed materials may not be the best use of our resources nor the best tool for our customers. We will work closely with 2-3 retail customers in 2016, likely one customer in each of our largest markets (Charlottesville, DC, Richmond), to identify best practices, share resources among the group, and further identify specific needs for in-store marketing and product branding. If successful, we will formalize the outcomes of this project to replicate and share with other customers.

We will continue to partner with our community on food access programs such as Harvest of the Month and Fresh Farmacy. These programs help us reach vulnerable populations and to make a direct impact in the health of our community.

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:
- 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 should have spent more time at the start of this grant identifying the true needs of our customers, rather than just guessing or taking a few anecdotal suggestions and trying to apply them to all of our customers. We could spend the first 2-3 months of the grant working closely with a small but diverse pool of customers to measure their needs and learn more from them. This would dictate specific action items to accomplish in the remainder of the grant period.

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 will continue to operate our successful community partnerships, including Harvest of the Month and Fresh Farmacy. Funding for Harvest of the Month has been secured by our partner organization to continue the program into 2017. We have not yet secured funding for Fresh Farmacy, but are working

closely with our partners to explore funding avenues and think strategically about how to best administer this program.

With the materials we have developed as a result of this grant, we are better suited to communicate our message and reach new customers and supporters. We will continue to utilize our new logo and subsequent materials as the best tool for outreach and communication, and the best branding for our products.

We are also considering a project to develop more product-specific marketing materials, such as a more specialized egg labels that details growing practices, a special package for bunched leafy greens, such as a twist tie, that enables us to carry our logo all the way to the end user, etc. We would work closely with our partner farms on this effort to develop products that are appropriate for tailored in-store marketing.

- 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?

Not at this time.