

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>	October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Dan Carlson and Emily Scott
Authorized Representative Phone:	206.650.8674
Authorized Representative Email:	karelifarm@aol.com
Recipient Organization Name:	Vashon Island Growers Association
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Cold Storage and Commercial Kitchen Plan
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15-LFPP-WA-0010
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Vashon, WA
Total Awarded Budget:	\$24,600.00

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: Evaluate the feasibility of a Vashon Island food hub, focused initially on aggregation, cold and freezer storage, commercial kitchen and processing.**

a. Progress Made: We formalized a steering committee of key community members. We advertised for, interviewed and hired a project manager. We hired the Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NABC) to conduct a feasibility analysis of a Vashon island food hub. We completed (with the help of NABC) a market assessment. An electronic survey for farmers/producers and consumers was developed and utilized. We conducted in-depth interviews with farmers, producers and consumers. We conducted a physical facility assessment, looking at 4 potential food hub sites in our community. NABC produced a final report and business plan.

b. Impact on Community: We have increased the community’s awareness and understanding of food hubs through outreach, meetings, our website, articles, a special insert in our local newspaper, a farmer/consumer survey and many personal interviews. We have broadened the community’s awareness of the Vashon Island Growers Association (VIGA) and our mission. We have established relationships with many new farmers and food entrepreneurs. We have shown that there is huge untapped potential in the local food market for our farmers and producers.

ii. **Goal/Objective 2: Develop a business plan for farmers to utilize the food hub and to market to wholesale, institutional, restaurants, and other buyers.**

a. Progress Made: A business plan was developed and presented by consultants at the Northwest Agricultural Business Center. The business plan was presented to the VIGA board, steering committee and other stakeholders and presented more widely to our membership at our annual meeting. The business plan is also available on our website and to anyone who requests a copy.

b. Impact on Community: The business plan shows that there is great untapped potential in our local food economy for our farmers and producers. Currently, local food accounts for only 1% of our food economy. Farmers and producers are excited and encouraged to realize the untapped potential quantified by the study.

iii. **Goal/Objective 3: Enhance market opportunities and income for Vashon Island growers.**

a. Progress Made: The feasibility study shows that a Vashon food hub is feasible, although it will require some startup funds. A Vashon food hub, once established, will open up new markets to Vashon growers and producers, allowing them to reach more, new and bigger customers (such as restaurants and schools) thus increase their earning potential.

b. Impact on Community: The viability of a future Vashon food hub has created a great deal of excitement and optimism in our community. Inspired by the study, a group applied for and won a grant to develop and pilot a mobile website that serves as a virtual food hub. Another group is researching ways to expand our

existing farmers' market structure to accommodate more producers and shoppers. Entrepreneurs are looking at ways their businesses can benefit from a food hub.

iv. Goal/Objective 4: Increase the amount and percentage of locally grown food that is purchased by Vashon Island-based restaurant managers, chefs, school cafeterias, and other wholesale and institutional buyers.

a. Progress Made: As part of the feasibility study, NABC contacted Vashon Island-based restaurant managers, chefs, school cafeterias, and other wholesale and institutional buyers (both on and off island) and discovered that there is a great demand for Vashon produce and products. Local chefs and restaurateurs are very interested in utilizing more Vashon product, especially if there is an easy way to access it, such as a food hub.

b. Impact on Community: The consumers contacted and interviewed by NABC now have a greater awareness of Vashon and its producing potential and of food hubs in general. They have indicated their willingness and desire to participate in a Vashon food hub. Likewise, producers have come to realize that their product is in real demand and can anticipate participating in broader markets thru a food hub.

v. Goal/Objective 5: Reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation of food on Vashon Island.

a. Progress Made: The study showed that local food consists of only 1% of our local food economy. That means that 99% of our food is transported onto the island. Any increase in the amount of local food consumed, even a modest percentage, will decrease the amount of food brought onto the island and decrease greenhouse gas emissions caused by transportation.

b. Impact on Community: The study has demonstrated that increasing the production and consumption of local food is an accessible goal and one that will bring many benefits, including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2015). Include further explanation if necessary.

- i. Number of direct jobs created: 1
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 0
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 2
- iv. Number of markets expanded: n/a
- v. Number of new markets established: n/a
- vi. Market sales increased by \$__ and increased by __% (not applicable).
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 41+
 - a. Percent Increase: 58%+

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, we established contact with many new farmers and producers. The idea of a food hub generated excitement with new and emerging food businesses that do not yet have established customers and markets. The study showed that there is a market for their product. The study also established that community organizations that serve low income populations (such as the

Food Bank, Senior Center and Vashon School District) are interested in purchasing product through a food hub which would increase the access of local food to low income populations.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. **Who are your community partners?** Vashon-Maury Food Bank, Vashon-Maury Land Trust, Sustainable Vashon
- ii. **How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?** Our community partners offered their support and expertise by serving on our steering committee, participating in the market research and by disseminating the project results to their boards and members.
- iii. **How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant?** VIGA has strong alliances with our community partners and other like-minded organizations. We support and complement each other's work. For example, the Land Trust recently purchased an historical piece of farm land. A food hub will help the Land Trust achieve their goals, one of which is supply locally grown food to the Vashon School District. Overall, this project strengthened and benefitted our community relationships.

5. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? Yes, we worked with consultants at the Northwest Agricultural Business Center (NABC). NABC conducted the feasibility study and produced the final study results and business plan. NABC has experience conducting feasibility studies and developing business plans specifically for local food hubs.

6. Have you publicized any results yet? Yes!

- i. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?** The feasibility study and business plan was presented to the VIGA board, the steering committee, community partners and other stakeholders. It was also presented to the VIGA membership at our annual meeting. The study is available on our website and by request.
- ii. **To whom did you publicize the results?** Board, steering committee, community partners & other stake holders, VIGA membership and community members.
- iii. **How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?** VIGA Board=9, Steering Committee=14, Community Partners=3 , VIGA membership=250, Community Members=3500

*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?** Verbal feedback was received at various stages of the study in response to presentations at board and steering committee meetings, at the final study presentation, during our annual meeting and in response our publication in the local newspaper.
- ii. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?** Community members and farmers were impressed and grateful that VIGA had undertaken the project. Producers appreciated the market research and the development of a preliminary budget.

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? No
 - 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).** The study greatly benefitted from two decisions: the first, to hire a project manager to oversee the project. The project manager was the point person that handled communication between board members, consultants and farmers and took on a multitude of tasks that would have otherwise fallen to an already very busy volunteer board. The second decision was to hire experienced consultants to do the actual feasibility study and business plan.
- ii. **If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:** We are happy to report that we achieved our goals.
- 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:** Hiring a project manager and consultants was key in preventing the volunteer board members from being overwhelmed by administrative tasks.

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.**

VIGA received a grant from the King Conservation District to pilot a mobile website that allows consumers to order local produce and products from their smart phones. The website will operate much like Amazon Fresh but will offer only local products. This project and the grant received to fund it are based directly on the success of our USDA funded feasibility study. The website (dubbed Vashon Fresh) essentially functions as an electronic web-based food hub. It is design to reach potential consumers (such as commuters) that find it difficult to visit farm stands or farmers markets. If successful, Vashon Fresh will create a new market for farmers and producers, increase their sales and make locally grown food more accessible. And the project creates two new jobs: a project manager and warehouse manager.
- 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?**

Attached is a copy of VIGA's KCD grant application which outlines the Vashon Fresh pilot project and goals.