

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. October 1-March 31, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2014-September 29, 2016
Today's Date:	12/1/16
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Recipient Organization Name:	Boston Public Market
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Boston Public Market Association's "Market Local" Initiative: a Community Outreach, Labeling and Small Business Development Project
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 15-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPP-MA-0077
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Boston, MA
Total Awarded Budget:	\$83,589

FMPP 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: _____

PROJECT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Boston Public Market is an indoor, year round marketplace for locally sourced groceries and specialty agricultural products, where residents and visitors can find fresh, seasonal, locally sourced food from Massachusetts and New England. The Market houses 39 local farmers, fishers, and food entrepreneurs selling items such as farm fresh produce; meat and poultry; eggs; milk and cheese; fish and shellfish; bread and baked goods; beverages; flowers; and an assortment of specialty and prepared foods. Everything sold at the Market is produced or originates in New England. The Boston Public Market is a dynamic civic space, educating the public about food sources, nutrition, and preparation.

When the BPMA was awarded the FMPP grant in September 2014, our small non-profit was concluding an intensive capital campaign to complete the fundraising goal of \$13M to begin Market construction. In the past two years, we have seen several milestones, including: the completion of the Market's construction, recruitment of 28 permanent opening vendors, the launch of the first all locally sourced market of its kind in the US, growing the number of permanent market vendors to 39, and our first full operating year. Throughout these two dynamic and entrepreneurial years, the Boston Public Market and our associated small, local businesses have deeply benefited from the support of the Farmers Market Promotion Program funds.

The following project goals and progress has been made during the two year grant cycle:

GOAL #1: Increase public awareness of the availability of regionally produced agricultural products through advertising and outreach.

Marketing & Public Relations

The support of the Farmers Market Promotion Program grant enabled us to successfully launch and sustain a marketing, advertising and public relations campaign focused on increasing public awareness of the availability of regionally produced agricultural products at Boston Public Market. Marketing, advertising and public relations efforts focused promoting grocery staples to local residents and the workforce population within a 1-mile radius of the Market. Tactics include earned media, building a robust social media presence, flyer and community engagement activities, in addition to paid advertising.

In September 2014, the BPMA launched a media, community, and customer engagement plan that focused on promoting the agricultural products and small local food businesses soon to be available year-round at the Boston Public Market. During the first year of this campaign, the Market and BPM vendors received over 250 unique stories in earned media coverage, all 38 BPM year-round vendors received a customized profile on the Market's website and 63 permanent, short term, and seasonal vendors were highlighted on the Market's website, newsletter, social media and press outreach. During the second year of the grant period, the Market and BPM vendors received over 350 unique earned media mentions, the Market's social media following almost doubled. This coverage helped more than 100 small, local food businesses promote their offerings to customers and residents of metro Boston and beyond.

Community Engagement

Establishing the Market as a civic institution and community resource for local food is a core part of our mission and central to our efforts to promote local agriculture and producers. BPM staff participated in community and local food-related events, speaking engagements, radio interviews, school visits and panels.

BPM staff created an annual community engagement calendar that includes both internal Market programs and external community and local food-related events. Market staff, vendors and representatives participated annually in the Let's Talk About Food Festival, Food Day, the Boston Local Food Festival, ArtWeek, Hub Week, HarborFest, First Night, the West End Children's Festival, Green Fest, Mass Agriculture Day, the MDAR Tomato Festival, Caroling at the Carousel and miscellaneous community partner driven events.

BPM staff and vendors regularly partner to offer free programming that focused on engaging our visitors and providing insight into local food products. In 2016, we offered two full weeks of daily free children's programming during Boston Public School's February Vacation Week and April Vacation week. Expanding on the content created during these school vacation programs, we offered eight free summer sessions to

community partners, inviting local young eaters to participate in a half day of education that included meeting producers and learning about their local food system in a hands-on and fun learning environment.

During the grant period, BPMA staff piloted and codified both a free public tour program and a free school fieldtrip program at the Market. Both programs aim to increase public awareness about local food and local production and are available, free of charge, to our customers, neighbors and visitors. Specific tour topics include shopping with kids, the Market as a regional food hub, shopping for a dinner party, seasonal agriculture, and feeding a family, as well as customized topics for specific dates and groups. This volunteer-lead program also seeks to connect guests to the makers who grow, catch, brew, raise, cultivate, bake, ferment, cook and harvest their food. These events and programs allowed BPM staff to promote the availability of fresh local food available year round to a broad audience.

GOAL #2: Increase consumer awareness of the benefits of regionally grown food through a market product labeling program.

During the grant period, BPMA staff conducted local labeling research, engaged nutrition communication and programming experts to understand best practices around consumer labeling efforts and incorporated Market-wide labeling standards into our tenant operating standards. Labeling standards for market tenants include guidelines for communication of pricing, weights/measures, sourcing, eligibility for SNAP/WIC, certain health and wellness messaging, and other basic information. Based on product variability, individual vendors' labeling practices and burned on individual vendors' staff, our focus shifted away from the creation of a standard BPM local label to instead focus on providing clear and origin/price/weight and SNAP messaging across all vendors.

This shift in focus achieved a better vendor adoption and clearer messaging around the BPM's central commitment to local, but was a different outcome than initial project planning suggested. The Market's core value proposition is that all the products sold are produced or originate in New England. Throughout the grant period, BPMA staff, Alipes (Market's branding firm) and BPM vendors have worked together to clearly and coherently communicate the unique, New England brand of Market products. Efforts include consistent signage across all vendor stalls about physical location of enterprise in relation to the Market and local messaging in common space.

These efforts have translated into greater in-Market branding around New England, more prominent signage about Market mission and local value proposition and the creation of the "Dinner Tonight" campaign. The Dinner Tonight campaign acts as a guide to the internal Market, offering a road map for customers to more easily shop for simple, quick, seasonal meals and understand local offerings at a glance. Positive customer feedback and utilization of this program incentivized BPMA staff to formalize it. In December 2016, the Boston Public Market Seasonal Cookbook launched. The cookbook features our 40 vendors and provides over 120 recipes for eating local produce all year long.

GOAL #3: Build entrepreneurial capacity of regional farmers, ranchers, and fishermen participating in BPMA markets through technical assistance, training, and networking.

SNAP Processing and Technical Assistance

Providing technical assistance for SNAP acceptance for individual vendors at their point of sale systems was a priority throughout during the grant period. BPM Program Manager and staff worked with FNS, MA DTA, MDAR and the City of Boston to understand the municipal, state and federal programs that support SNAP and match SNAP incentives for local producers. BPMA implemented Market-wide standards, best practices, training and individualized support for each of the Market's vendors selling SNAP-eligible products. BPM Program Manager worked regularly and with individuals with many vendors to answer questions, troubleshoot equipment, build customer service best practices and provide outside technical assistance. MA DTA, MDAR and BPM staff collaborated to host training workshops twice annually on SNAP for vendors and their employees and provided tailored follow-up support.

In addition to supporting our permanent vendors, BPM staff also implemented a system for short-term vendors to accept SNAP. The BPM invested in POS hardware (audio jack scanners and wireless printers) and Mobile Market+ licenses for short-term vendors visiting the Market for 1 week or 1 month periods. This allowed small businesses that sold SNAP eligible items for a limited time to access SNAP at the Market. These vendors used BPM's Mobile Market + software and equipment to accept SNAP at their individual stalls. During the grant period, 52 local food businesses were able to accept SNAP benefits for eligible local food and seeds.

BPM Vendor Small Business Development Series

BPMA staff worked with vendors and partners to identify areas where technical assistance would benefit the market community. Staff implemented regular "office hours" on the floor where BPM Operations Manager and other staff regularly offered drop in assistance. Based on vendor feedback, BPM staff established a regular "Promotions Committee" that convenes monthly to discuss press, community engagement, marketing and educational opportunities for the Market. These meetings are also an opportunity for BPM staff and individual vendors to discuss best practices for communications, marketing and public relations.

During the grant period, BPMA staff worked with partners and vendors to host and deliver training and technical assistance sessions. These opportunities were offered to the internal BPM vendor community and are often formatted as 1 hour, face-to-face workshops that take place in the Market's demonstration teaching kitchen. Small business development topics include: a story telling and branding workshop, a Rural Development Value Added Producer Grant workshop, a hiring workshop for food entrepreneurship and peer coaching focused on customer service and communicating value proposition of local.

IMPACT

The impact of this grant can be measured in a variety of ways, including through the scope and quality of messaging about local agricultural produces to a broad, diverse audience. In the summer of 2015, the BPMA published its first annual report, available publically online at the Market's website. This report details a year period starting at Market launch in July 2015. In the Market's first full year of operation—from January 2015 to December 2016—we continued to see progress. The Market welcomed over 2 million visitors, BPM vendors saw over \$13.6 million total in sales, saw a 12% increase in SNAP and Boston Bounty Bucks sales, welcomed 5 new vendors and saw 4 vendor expansions.

Additionally, the BPMA increased awareness about local agriculture during the grant period by:

- ✓ **SUPPORTING LOCAL PRODUCERS:** 39 small businesses call the Market home and we have hosted 31 unique short-term visitors; selling over 280 farm goods; sourcing from over 1,000 local fishermen; creating and supporting 160+ new jobs, not including the 100 construction jobs created during build out; offering regular, free technical assistance to producers and ensuring that all vendors in the Market can accept SNAP/EBT
- ✓ **GETTING THE WORD OUT:** earning early 500 media mentions, advertising in local publications ranging from The Boston Globe, Improper Bostonian, Baystate Banner, Beacon Hill Times and Edible Boston, programming digital billboards across Massachusetts for 3 months with information on how to support local farmers by shopping at the BPM, Winning excellence awards including: a MarCOMM award, Bostino's 2015 50 on Fire, Boston Magazine's best new restaurant, 2015 excellence in civic entrepreneurship by Babson and the Chamber
- ✓ **BUILDING AN ONLINE COMMUNITY:** growing from 820 to 35.8K Instagram followers, receiving 15,537 Likes on Facebook, establishing a robust, high traffic website that includes individual pages and information about our 39 vendors, regularly communicating to over 7,000 newsletter subscribers
- ✓ **CULTIVATING NEW AUDIENCES:** \$13.6 million in sales represents a new, diverse, expanding customer base of local customers and visitors; expanding connections to local producers by hosting 40 full time, 31 unique short-term and 77 total small businesses in the Market
- ✓ **COMMUNICATING LOCAL INSIDE THE MARKET:** developing and maintaining seasonal, produce-focused banners on the external building;

established consistent messaging for all 39 permanent market vendors; distributed literature and weekly happenings to our +150,000 monthly visitors

- ✓ **PROVIDING LOCAL FOOD EDUCATION:** Offering regular, free public programming in partnership with our vendors, providing daily free children's programming during Boston Public School's February, April and Summer Vacation weeks, launching both a free public tour program and a free field trip program, hosting over 1,000 school students for fieldtrips in 2016, hosting community events, like a regular concert series, ArtWeek, providing gallery space for local artists, and acting as a Summer Food Service Program site
- ✓ **WORKING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS:** partnering with mission aligned organizations, like American Heart Association, the New England Aquarium, ArtWeek Boston, Hub Week, Boys and Girls Club, Greater Boston Food Bank, the Food Project, New England Forestry Foundation and many others to expand our scope of outreach, fostering a robust community-tabling program, where partners like Community Servings, Project Heal, and Massachusetts WIC can have a presence on the Market floor to perform mission-aligned educational activities and promote the local food via their social media networks
- ✓ **IMPROVING LOCAL FOOD ACCESS TO ALL:** supporting SNAP, BBB, Senior and WIC coupon acceptance for all eligible products, offering more fresh, local options for low income customers; donating over 38,000 pounds of fresh food – the equivalent of 31,670 meals—through partners in Boston's hunger relief network

LESSONS LEARNED + THE FUTURE

During the grant period, the Boston Public Market experienced transitions from concept development to construction, construction to launch, and launch to our first full year of operation. We have approached the last two years as a period of startup and a pilot phase for many of our programs, marketing strategies, and vendor support program. Above all, we have seen the marked difference between our outdoor farmers markets, our original Market concept and operating a full time, local grocery retail year-round in urban Boston.

The Market is located in a neighborhood currently transitioning from tourist to mixed use residential. At the time of launch, national customer trends and preferences for local were growing exponentially and fresh format grocery was becoming increasingly popular in metro Boston. Our year one sales and foot traffic indicated a broad interest in engaging local food, local producers and places that support local small businesses.

With the close of operating year one and the start of operating year two, we are focused on expanding the following key learnings:

MARKETING & CUSTOMER EDUCATION

While we are not a traditional grocery store, we compete with many more traditional retail establishments. Building the brand of the Boston Public Market has been an ongoing project that will continue as we reach more customers, visitors and local producers. We've learned that our marketing and outreach efforts should include a range of traditional advertising, consumer marketing and broad educational efforts. We need the need to educate our customers about many aspects of local production, including the role of local producers in a thriving local economy, the impact of choosing local on farm communities and strategies for cooking and eating locally in seasonal New England. Boston Public Market features countless opportunities to meet and learn from local farmers, fishers, and food entrepreneurs, and includes additional features such as a cookbook exchange, a Kid's Nook, and even an indoor working beehive. Our future work includes expanding and formalizing our local food education resources and continuing our marketing campaigns to ensure greater customer awareness about the benefits of regionally grown food.

BUILDING LONG TERM GROCERY CUSTOMERS

Residents and grocery customers form the bedrock of the Market's success. These customers shop regularly, have relatively larger market baskets and purchase whole food and fresh items that farmers, bakers, fermenters, apiaries, fishers and dairy producers offer. In order to maximize our success and the success of our vendors, we'll need to better understand and reach our core customer.

Part of this effort includes increasing customer utilization of SNAP and BBB to reflect the scale of other retail sales in the Market. In addition to our ongoing efforts to provide technical assistance to vendors to increase their SNAP customer base and SNAP customer service, we are broadening our accessibility efforts to include targeted customer outreach and a promotional campaign.

In the future, we will continue to explore the desires of our core customer group, and cultivate a strong loyalty to our local producer.

SUPPORTING FARMERS LONG TERM

The Boston Public Market is only successful if it supports regional farmers and producers in a long term, sustainable way. The demands of a full time, urban retail operation are particularly great for farmers, who in general bear the brunt of a vertically intergraded supply chain that lacks appropriately scaled infrastructure to support local small business. We have learned that merely marketing farm products and driving food traffic to our vendors is not enough to ensure that they thrive. After a record drought in summer of 2016, BPMA became increasingly aware that our farmers and supply farms need additional, long-term support.

Improving vendor capacity through technical assistance, partnership, and collective action is an ongoing and important effort for this enterprise. BPM management will continue to provide access to additional experts, coaching, and resources based on vendor feedback. In the future, we will be expanding technical assistance programs, reevaluating our rent structure for farmers and putting additional marketing dollars behind growing the customer base that supports farmers year round.

PARTNERSHIP IS CRITICAL TO SUCCESS

The impact of our marketing, education, recruitment, technical assistance, and customer engagement efforts is magnified by the support and engagement of our network of supporters and partners. We have greatly benefited from the expertise, scope, and amplification of our efforts through a growing network of community groups, funders, producers and friends of the Market. In the future, we will grow our network of partners and commit to many more collaborative efforts to support local food producers across our region. We particularly hope to expand partnerships with regional growers groups, producer coalitions and other associations that can connect regional farmers to the Market and our vendors to businesses resources.

MISCELLENOUS

No contractors were used to conduct work for this project and no income was earned as a direct result of grant activities. Financials and metrics are publically available through July 2016 in the Boston Public Market annual report (attached). Updated public data will be available in July 2017.