

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)
Final Performance Report**

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. As stated in the FMPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future FMPP or Local Food 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 FMPP 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 FMPP staff to avoid delays:

FMPP Phone: 202-690-4152; Email: USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-690-4152

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact FMPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	Sept. 30, 2014 to Sept. 30, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Kenneth C. Regal
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Recipient Organization Name:	Just Harvest Education Fund
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Fresh Access – Expanded EBT in Pittsburgh
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	#14-FMPPX-PA-0146
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Pittsburgh, PA

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Total Awarded Budget:	\$99,950.00
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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: _____

1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP 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:
 - a. Progress Made:
 - b. Impact on Community:
 - ii. Goal/Objective 2:
 - a. Progress Made:
 - b. Impact on Community:
 - iii. Goal/Objective 3:
 - a. Progress Made:
 - b. Impact on Community:

Goal #1 – Object/Activity 1: Our first objective is to operate Fresh Access market kiosks providing EBT/Credit/Debit card capacity to nine of the eleven markets on each day of market activity through the later part of the 2014 market season and throughout the 2015 market season.

Progress Made: Our primary goal was to increase EBT Access to high-quality affordable foods at Farmers Markets for low-income consumers in and around Pittsburgh, PA at nine locations including 7 Low-income/Low-Access priority areas. We achieved this objective in 2014 by providing EBT access at 9 local markets, and exceeded the objective by expanding to 11 markets in 2015 and to 13 markets in 2016. Following the end of the contract period, this effort has remained sustainable with non-federal funds, laying the groundwork for expansion to 2 additional location for the 2017 marketing season. By the end of the contract period, Fresh Access was operating at the following locations: nine neighborhood markets in the City of Pittsburgh: Beechview, Carrick, East Liberty, Market Square (downtown Pittsburgh), Mellon Square downtown Pittsburgh), North Side, Sheraden, South Side, and Squirrel Hill, and the nearby smaller towns of Sharpsburg, Swissvale, West Homestead, and Wilkinsburg. In 2017, we will add program capacity at markets in the Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh and in Clairton, an economically distressed and low-access community south of Pittsburgh in the Monongehela River Valley.

Impact on Community:

Prior to the start of the project, our baselines were based upon sales volume in both EBT and non-EBT electronic sales for the 2013 season and the first months of the 2014 season. As the chart below, indicates, Just Harvest’s Fresh Access program had a major successful impact as measured by total sales at the participating markets:

Baseline and Performance Data Fresh Access Markets						
	2013 season	2014 season prior to 9/30	2014 season 9/30 to 11/30	2015 season	2016 season	% increase 2016 over 2013 baseline
Ebt \$	\$ 18,834	\$ 19,322	\$ 6,589	\$42, 829	\$39,005	107.1%
Non-ebt \$	\$ 29,948	\$ 55,594	\$ 21,348	\$111,596	\$127,159	324.6%
Sub-total	\$ 45,782	\$ 74,916	\$ 27,937	\$154,425	\$166,164	262.9%
Food bucks (SNAP Incentives, non-FMPP funds)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 16,904	\$15,201	NMF
Total	\$ 45,782	\$ 74,916	\$ 27,937	\$171,339	\$181,365	296.1%

Sales in all categories were up significantly, with EBT sales more than doubling from the 2013 season to the 2016 season. Individual transactions, unique customer counts, and number of participating vendors also increased significantly during the project period. We processed 1,138 EBT transactions in the entire 2013 season, by the end of the project period in September 2016, this total had already increased by 52.9% to 1,740 transactions with nearly two months remaining in the marketing season. In a modest unscientific set of customer surveys during the 2016 market season, 90% of EBT shoppers surveyed said that Fresh Access was “important” or “very important” in their decision to shop at a farmers’ market.

Goal #1 – Object/Activity 2: Our second objective for this goal is to provide technical assistance to the other two markets (Bloomfield Saturday, and Lawrenceville) that will implement their own EBT access programs under the Fresh Access brand.

Progress Made: We exceeded this objective as well, by implementing Partner Market arrangements with four markets in 2015, adding a fifth (albeit a very small new market with only a handful of transactions) in 2016, and as the project period came to a close in fall of 2016, developing plans for a sixth partner market in 2017. Meetings with partners in the off-season clarified and improved the technical assistance we provide. We carried out on-site visits to partner markets to confirm that tracking systems were being well implemented, and received monthly transaction reports from all partners to track sales volume. In the 2016 season we added a fifth partner market in the Homewood section of Pittsburgh, one the city’s lowest-income areas. This market, in its very first season, was organized by the Black Urban Gardeners and Farmers Co-op. While the management of this market was enthusiastic, they ran into some technical challenges that prevented them from running transactions through part of the season, and handled only a few transactions by the project’s end. They hope to resume operations in the late summer of 2017.

Impact on Community: We increased the number of partner markets, expanding the reach of Fresh Access across a wider range of communities. Electronic sales and customer traffic for the partners increased significantly during the project period. Although we did not have 2013 or 2014 baseline data for our first two partner markets, in 2015 electronic sales at partner markets totaled \$3,930 in EBT sales and \$21,672 in credit/debit card sales for the entire season. By the end of the project period in Sept. 2016, partner sales were already up 7.4% year-to-date and by the end of the market season had increased by 16.9%. Non-EBT electronic sales rose 56.4% year-to-date by Sept. 30 from 2015-2016 and ended the market season up 60.4%.

Goal #1 – Object/Activity 3: Our third objective for this goal is to conduct community-based outreach and publicity activities to enable community residents, especially low-income people, to learn about the markets, about electronic capacity at the markets, and about the benefits of fresh, locally produced food.

Progress Made: We made significant progress in all aspects of our community-based outreach strategy over the course of the project, designing and distributing hundreds of posters as well as tens of thousands of brochures, postcards, and information flyers. Aimed primarily at low-income shoppers, and written in three languages (English, Spanish, Nepali: see details goal 2 below), these outreach materials were distributed in coordination with a wide range of community coalition partners and organizational allies. We distributed materials through senior centers, state and county human service offices, neighborhood organizations, legislative offices, immigrant and refugee service providers, and many other sources. These community outreach strategies were supplemented further by significant earned media coverage in local print and broadcast media outlets and by social media efforts across numerous platforms. Prior to the start of the FMPP contract period, our poster for the project was the winner of the Farmers Market Coalition's best SNAP EBT poster award in 2014. A link to Fresh Access information is also contained on farmers' market page of the City of Pittsburgh Parks Department's website, viewed by thousands of city residents.

Impact on Community: During the project period, our outreach efforts reached tens of thousands of low-income consumers directly across many of Allegheny County's low-income and low-access communities, and many more through our earned and social media outreach efforts. We also provided assistance to the City of Pittsburgh and our partner markets in promoting their Farmers Markets with web-based content, news releases, and other materials.

Goal #2 – Object/Activity 1: We will coordinate discussions between ethnic/cultural communities and vendors about food products they would like to see available at the farmers markets.

Progress Made: We worked successfully with community groups serving immigrant and refugee communities to engage them with farmer/vendors about the product mix and cultural sensitivity of the markets. Latino/a and Bhutanese community organizations were our main partners in this effort, though we also worked closely with our County Department of Human Services' office focused on immigrant services. We participated in that agency's Food and Farming Access working group to build trusting relationships between immigrants and local farmers, and to explore the possibility – still evolving as of this writing – of Bhutanese refugees becoming small urban farmer/vendors themselves. This effort also identified farmers interested in planting specific culturally-targeted produce (for example: edible gourds, hot peppers and tomatillos) sought by Bhutanese and Latino/a consumers for sale at the specific markets (Carrick and Beechview) closest to their local population centers.

Impact on Community: Weather challenges made it difficult for local farmers to bring Bhutanese edible gourds to market in 2015 as planned, but the markets continue to make progress in becoming more culturally diverse. The Bhutanese Community Association and County Human Services continue to work on an urban farming initiative and a few Latino/a vendors have been selling at Fresh Access participating markets. The Carrick and Beechview markets remain rather small, however and some of the potential impact our work in this arena remains untapped.

Goal #2 – Object/Activity 2: We will translate our Farmers’ Market and Fresh Access outreach materials into Nepali and Spanish.

Progress Made: This objective was completed throughout the 2015 and 2016 market seasons with quite positive feedback from our key partners in the Bhutanese and Latino communities. Although we lacked capacity to include Spanish speaking customers in our customer surveys in 2015, we were able to dedicate some time by our Spanish-speaking VISTA volunteer and other volunteers to help collect customer data from Latino shoppers at the Beechview market in 2016.

Impact on Community: In addition to hard-copy distribution of Spanish and Nepali posters and handouts, we also provided translated digital versions of our brochures with Casa San Jose, a local agency that works with Latino/a immigrants in the region and with the Bhutanese Community Association for distribution through their own networks.

Goal #2 – Object/Activity 3: We will work with Citiparks staff to deepen their understanding and response to the opportunity that new ethnic communities represent for broader neighborhood vitality working to strengthen the overall performance of smaller farmers markets in these communities.

Progress Made: Progress in this area faced some major challenges, some from circumstances beyond Just Harvest's direct control. The two markets located in the neighborhoods nearest to significant populations continue to struggle in terms of number of vendors, number of customers, and variety of items available. To some extent, this is more related to the limited space available for these markets and low overall shopper traffic in these locations, than to issues specific to the new ethnic diversity in these communities. Despite these challenges, we worked successfully with the Citiparks management and with the City’s Welcoming Pittsburgh initiative to include the farmers markets in broader efforts to make Pittsburgh more welcoming to new immigrants. We also worked on joint programming with a campus group at the University of Pittsburgh working on opportunities for refugees.

Impact on Community: As of the conclusion of the project period, we are still working on a long-term process of relationship and market-building. Recent changes in urban agriculture zoning laws in Pittsburgh are making it easier to sell home- or community garden-grown produce at farmers markets, providing long term opportunity for new success in this area.

Goal #3 – Object/Activity 1: We will conduct thorough program evaluation with both quantitative and qualitative measures of our impact, visibility, and sustainability.

Progress Made: Throughout the contract, we conducted careful data tracking of sales volume by EBT and non-EBT transactions, by market site, and by week for the 2016 market season, to compare to 2014 and 2105 data. We tracked the impact of our outreach efforts and analyzed trends in our operating and processing costs per market site and sales volume. We finished collecting daily, market-specific sales and transaction data from all participating markets and as reported from the five partner markets. We also collected customer surveys and vendor feedback surveys. Topics included: comparisons of farmers' markets in terms of price, quality, and selection to other retail options; tracking how customers found out about the program, to gauge the effectiveness of our outreach; the impact of our new Food Bucks incentive program on SNAP shoppers' fruit and vegetable consumption.

Impact on Community: Data trends showed a slight drop from 2015 to 2016 in total SNAP sales at Fresh Access markets but an overall dramatic increase in customer traffic, ebt and non-ebt transactions, and total sales from the start of the project to its complete. Vendor and customer surveys show broad and deep satisfaction with the program.

Goal #3 – Object/Activity 2: We will engage in initial discussions with other interested nearby Farmers Markets that indicate interest in joining Fresh Access in 2016 or beyond.

Progress Made: As noted above, we expanded market participation in each year during the project and anticipate continued expansion in 2017.

Impact on Community: As our expansion continues, more and more consumers have better and better access to fresh produce and other goods at local farmers markets. SNAP shoppers in low-access areas throughout the County have improved access to fresh affordable food. Thanks to multiple community partnerships, Fresh Access project continues to point to continued and sustainable growth in the future

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, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.
 - i. Number of direct jobs created: Not Applicable
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: not applicable
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: not applicable
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: 18
 - v. Number of new markets established: 0
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$176,806 (measuring electronic sales only including partner markets) and increased by 386% over 2013.

- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 113
 - a. Percent Increase: 21.5% over 2014 (176% over 2013). In 2013, 41 vendors participated in Fresh Access. This increased to 93 in 2014, 101 in 2015, and 113 in 2016.

- 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, as noted in question 1 (goal #2) above we have expanded local farmers market customers bases to include Pittsburgh's small but growing Latino/a population and to be more welcoming to our population of recent refugees from Bhutan. We have made significant inroads in improving fresh food access for low-income/low-access populations by creating EBT capacity in numerous low-income and low-access communities. These low-income communities include Sharpsburg, West Homestead, and Wilkinsburg as well as several neighborhoods in the city of Pittsburgh. High levels of SNAP transactions at our two downtown locations also demonstrate a broad expansion of access to farm-fresh food for SNAP users regardless of the community in which they live. Because downtown Pittsburgh is not residential but it the main commercial and mass transit hub of the county, the downtown markets serve a large countywide demographic.

- 4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners?

Just Harvest takes considerable pride in our strong commitment to a partnership-driven strategy across our programs and this project is no exception. Our most critical partners, of course, are the entities that manage the participating and partner markets in the Fresh Access program and the 113 vendors who sell at these markets. Market operators include the City of Pittsburgh Parks Department ("Citiparks") and municipal governments in Moon Township and West Homestead; Community Development groups in Bloomfield, Lawrenceville, Downtown, Sharpsburg, and Swissvale; a church in Peters Township; a Chamber of Commerce in Wilkinsburg, and a community empowerment organization in Homewood. We rely extensively for outreach to new immigrant groups on the Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh, the Prospect Park Family Center, the Latino Family Center, Casa San Jose, AJAPO, the resettlement program of Jewish Family and Childrens' Services, and the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. The Allegheny County Health Department and its Live Well Allegheny initiative is a key partner in securing private funding to supplement the FMPP funding and continue the project beyond the completion of the FMPP contract period. Numerous community organizations and social service providers in the areas surrounding the markets are key allies in helping with community-based publicity. The United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council, the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank are among the area-wide organizations that have helped expand the programs reach and visibility.

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

Each of these partners contributes to our success in different ways. Vendors and Market operators, of course, provide the market infrastructure in which Fresh Access can operate. Community organizations help with outreach to low-income shoppers and help spread the message about the importance of fresh food consumption. The Health Department provides both funding a public health context for the program's goals, as well as technical help in some aspects of our data collection and analysis.

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

As of this writing, these key partners are already engaged in supporting the ongoing sustainability of Fresh Access, with funding, publicity, market operations, outreach, and evaluation.

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

The only contracted services used in the project were translation of our outreach materials into Spanish and Nepali. These contracts were with our community-based partners and were instrumental in the progress of our outreach to non-English speaking shoppers.

- 6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? Various results over the course of the project were publicized through our 2015 annual report (and our recently completed 2016 annual report which has not yet been widely circulated), in partner meetings, and in our social media. These are "results" in a general sense, describing the broad accomplishments of the Fresh Access initiative in the context of Just Harvest's other work. They did not include any formal final report on the FMPP contract.
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results? Just Harvest's individual contributors and volunteers receive our annual report, partners such as the Food Policy Council and County Health Department with whom we meet regularly, and our social media followers/
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? Approximately 500.
- iv.

*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).

Electronic examples will be attached to the final version of this report. See attached samples of posters, signs, promotional materials, and a feature article on the project in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Additional Post-Gazette news items about the project can be found at <http://www.post-gazette.com/life/food/forks/2013/08/08/Use-your-cards-at-the-farmers-markets/stories/201308080403> and at

<http://www.post-gazette.com/life/food-column/2015/09/30/Food-Column-With-food-two-groups-help-immigrants-to-assimilate/stories/201509300041>

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?
 - i. If so, how did you collect the information? Formal feedback is gathered from random customer surveys, anecdotal stories from individual shoppers who agree to more extensive interviews, and from post-season vendor surveys.
 - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? 77% of all shoppers and 90% of EBT shoppers surveyed said that Fresh Access was “important” or “very important” in their decision to shop at a farmers’ market. 86% of vendors were “somewhat satisfied” “very satisfied” with the Fresh Access program overall, and 66% of vendors described it as having a “strong impact” or “moderate impact” on their overall sales volume.

8. Budget Summary:
 - i. As part of the FMPP 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. 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).

Overall, the project has been enormously successful as a “win-win” for both farmer/vendors and for customers with low access to fresh produce and other healthy food choices. A thriving farmer’s market environment has a range of other positive impacts on quality of life, driving community diversity, improving customer traffic in business districts, and preserving local agricultural production and a diverse regional economy. As part of our overall strategy for addressing food deserts in and around Pittsburgh, Fresh Access has been a key improvement in fresh food access for thousands of low-income consumers. We are perhaps proudest of the program’s impact on the fundamental dignity of the people we serve. Not only does Fresh Access provide EBT capacity at markets to give SNAP users better choices, but by making Fresh Access a non-judgmental and non-discriminating environment for affluent and low-income people to shop together with credit cards, debit cards, or EBT cards, we break down the unfair stereotypes and false barriers that divide us.

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:
All major objectives were completed. Challenges in broadening the responsiveness of the markets to new immigrant communities is part of a much larger long-term challenge for our community. Short-term progress was achieved but long-term change is beyond the scope of any single type of cross-cultural interaction. The economic challenges facing very small markets with limited space and few vendors are also beyond the scope of a project such as this. In the Pittsburgh area, strong neighborhood loyalties and fragmented municipal governments tend to create a highly decentralized farmers market environment where a limited number of vendors are sought after by more markets than there are days in the week.
- 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:
Strong community partnerships from local government to grassroots community groups are an essential ingredient in our success. This sort of project works best when multiple stakeholders with varying perspectives participate together for mutual benefit.

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.

Thanks to major support from the Allegheny County Health Department, the Fresh Access project is continuing to grow beyond the end of the FMPP contract period. Plans are in place for continued growth in 2017 and 2018, and the program is broadly popular with shoppers, vendors, market managers, and partners. Beyond the operation of the project itself, Just Harvest's Fresh Access program is now identified in the public mind as part of what makes local farmers' markets successful, and it is in place at Just Harvest as a key part of a broader strategy to alleviate the struggles of low-income people living in food deserts. It works hand-in-hand with our Fresh Corners initiative, currently working to create a network of Healthy Corner Stores in low-income areas across the county. Linkages with local government and community development programs now see the value of accessible food retail as part of what is needed for a community to thrive. We continue to build new partnerships, explore new opportunities, and build new solutions in food desert communities. We are in discussions now with partners to carry out youth nutrition education activities at markets, coordinate with health care providers on SNAP produce incentive programs, and small new farmers markets as low-risk "proof of concept" experiments in the viability of more permanent healthy food retail options in low-income communities.

- 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?

A deeper understanding of the various roles that local governments play as operators/managers/site hosts/ facilitators/regulators for farmers markets would be helpful.