

## 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](mailto: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.

<b>Report Date Range:</b> <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	October 1, 2015 – September 29, 2017
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	Rachel Lord
<b>Authorized Representative Phone:</b>	907-235-4068
<b>Authorized Representative Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:rachel@inletkeeper.org">rachel@inletkeeper.org</a>
<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Cook Inletkeeper
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	<i>Expanding local food markets and access through an online food hub on the Lower Kenai Peninsula</i>
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	#15-LFPP-AK-0061
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2015
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Homer, AK
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$92,230

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: Robbi Mixon; Email: [robbi@inletkeeper.org](mailto:robbi@inletkeeper.org); Phone: 907-235-4068 ext 23

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.

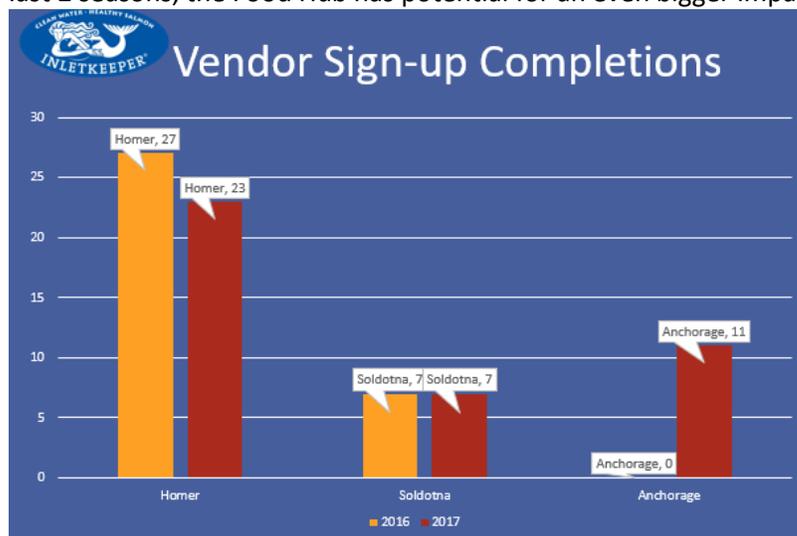
1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by LFPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional 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: Develop an online food hub system that will be live by April 2016.**

- **Progress Made:** We will open for our second season in 2017, April 12 (Homer), April 28 (Soldotna), and May 26 (Seldovia), and launched a 4-month trial in for Anchorage, July 7.
- **Impact on Community:** The Kenai Peninsula Food Hub included three drop-points in Homer, Soldotna, and Seldovia (a fly/boat-in only village with limited access to local products), along with a trial in Anchorage. At the close of the 2016 season, we sold just under \$28,000 in products and memberships. At the close of the 2017 season, we sold just over \$40,000, and increased our revenue by 98%. Providing new avenues for sales for our producers has increased the amount of local foods purchased in each of these communities. Many producers have increased production, in hopes of increased sales through the Food Hub.

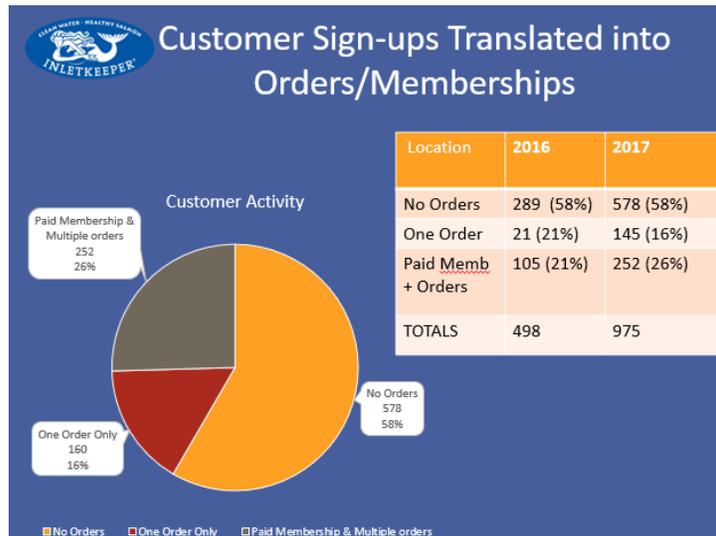
ii. **Goal/Objective 2: Educate at least 12 local producers on selling and marketing through the new food hub in year one, and encourage at least six new prospective producers in year two.**

- **Progress Made:** At the end of our 2016 season, we had 33 vendors signed up to sell products. At the close of our 2017 season, we had 41 signed up, increasing our vendors by 8.
- **Impact on Community:** Through this project, in 2016 we have expanded marketing opportunities for 23 producers, 6 crafters, and 4 seafood vendors (33 total); in 2017: 32 producers, 5 crafters, and 4 seafood producers (41 total). In Social media, website, radio and print ads, and our weekly newsletter have engaged a wide audience, increasing the demand for local produce and other products. Farmers were given a Producers can count on the Food Hub for a small, but steady, portion of their income. As reflected by the growth over the last 2 seasons, the Food Hub has potential for an even bigger impact.



iii. **Goal/Objective 3: Conduct a public relations/marketing campaign throughout the Lower Kenai Peninsula to market the new food hub and obtain at least 50 individual buyers in the first year and an additional 50 in year two.**

- **Progress Made:** Marketing and outreach efforts season included radio ads on a variety of stations, print ads in newspapers and magazines, and guest appearances on radio shows, including the Alaska statewide, “AG MATTERS.” We’ve attended a variety of outreach events including Health and Wellness Fairs, Salmonfest Music Festival, City Council and community outreach meetings, and have presented at a number of conferences, including the Alaska Food Policy Council Conference and the Alaska Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. In 2017, we turned our focus towards Facebook ads, as well as target local audiences in new ways, for example, playing our promotional animated video before movies at the local theater. We also conducted a series of “Farmers Roundtable” sessions, aimed at providing educational opportunities to our farmers. Session topics included book discussions, crop planning, food safety planning, advertising, and website development.
- **Impact on Community:** Outreach efforts during the 2016 season yielded 498 total customer sign-ups, with 42% of those completing one or more purchases. The Food Hub is helping to spread awareness about the importance (and quality) of locally grown food. In 2017 our customer sign-ups grew to 975, an almost 100% increase, with 42% completing one or more purchase on the food hub.

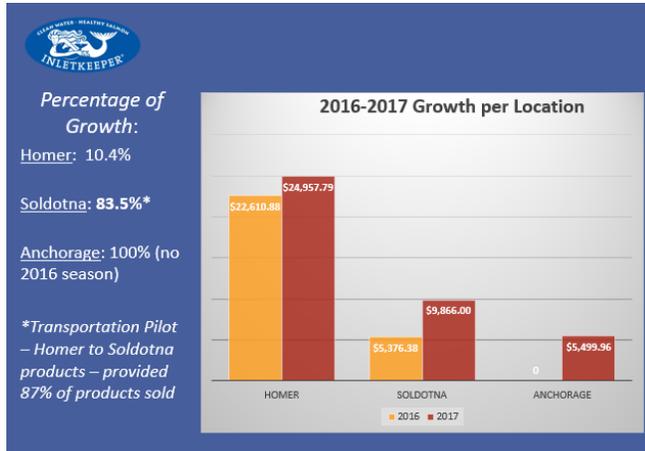


iv. **Goal/Objective 4: Develop media and marketing packets for all participating food hub producers to increase their food hub farm sales by at least 10% over the course of the two-year project.**

- **Progress Made:** During September 2016, we completed professional photography sessions with 9 producers and 1 pick-up location. Each producer received 30-50 print and web formatted photographs. During the 2017 season, these photos were used to create media and marketing packets for each producer. Packets included branded rack cards, flyers, stickers, and a guide to our website, logo downloads, social media pages, and contact information. We

used these images in all our promotional material, including our website and online marketplace. Between 2016 and 2017, we saw a 44% growth in product sales on the Food Hub (2016: \$27,987 to 2017: \$40,323).

- **Impact on Community:** Producers have gained greater exposure through producer profile pages, Food Hub social media (website, newsletter, Facebook), an animated cartoon, and have used photographs in their own marketing efforts. With professionally produced media and advertising material, the community is exposed to appealing images of local food and create a deeper connection to those growing the food.



**100% local produce, seafood, meat, eggs, honey, flowers, crafts**

**Kenai Peninsula FOOD HUB**

We make local easy!  
Shop from your device  
Convenient online payment  
Quick and easy pick up

**Shop Local Foods:**

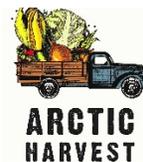
- 1 Create an account (from our website, click Go to Online Marketplace)
- 2 Select local products and add to your cart each week!
- 3 Swing by during the weekly pickup window, retrieve your goods, and enjoy the freshest food around.

We're connecting farmers and the community to strengthen our local economy, increase food security, and reduce our carbon footprint from imported foods.

**KenaiFoodHub.org**

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 20\_\_). Include further explanation if necessary.
  - i. **Number of direct jobs created:** Local Foods/Food Hub Director, part-time
  - ii. **Number of jobs retained:** one- Clean Water Program Director, created new program
  - iii. **Number of indirect jobs created:** 82 (41 active vendors, average of two workers each)
  - iv. **Number of markets expanded:** 0

- v. **Number of new markets established:** 4- these online Food Hub markets based in the communities of Homer, Seldovia, Soldotna on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska and in Anchorage.
  - vi. **Market sales increased by \$40,323. and increased by 100%.**
  - vii. **Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:** 41 directly, by actively using the Food Hub for sales; another 20 attended workshops/educational events sponsored by the food hub; 61 total
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?** We received word from the USDA FNS program that Food Hubs were still not eligible (reapplied as a SNAP vendor for the 2017 season- denied). The Food Hub delivered orders via Ferry to a remote village of Seldovia, with the help of Seldovia Village Tribe, a local native cooperation, with a focus on healthy communities. The food hub also served at least 3 local businesses. In 2017, our hosting organization, Cook Inletkeeper, subsidized transportation between food hub sites, to increase product availability and quantity to the Soldotna area. Hosting organization also subsidized the Anchorage 4-month trial. One of our major producers for Anchorage was Alaska Seeds of Change, a project of an Alaskan native corporation, that supports “employment, comprehensive educational and vocational services, and community-based behavioral health services to up to 20 transition-age (16-24 years old) young adults. Youth participate in all major aspects of running our urban agriculture business, with the opportunity to take on increasing job responsibilities and leadership roles.”
4. **Discuss your community partnerships.** Building strong and diverse partnerships are vital to the success of projects like ours. Making sure multiple stakeholder perspectives are represented is crucial for long-term trust and buy-in.



- i. **Who are your community partners?** Community partners for this project include several non-profit organizations and private business people/farmers/vendors.
  - Homer Soil and Water Conservation District
  - Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District
  - Sustainable Homer, a local citizens group working for sustainable solutions to community needs, including increased access to Local Foods.
  - Alaska Marine Conservation Council, a statewide nonprofit organization that helps fishermen with direct marketing of seafood (in addition to other activities) and is helping engage fishermen for participation as producers on the Food Hub.
  - Arctic Harvest Deliveries, is a local produce distributor out of Anchorage, Alaska
  - Seldovia Village Tribe, a tribal organization in Seldovia who runs a seasonal ferry and is assisting with outreach and transportation of Food Hub purchases to this neighboring community.
  - Kachemak Community Center & Christ Lutheran Church
  - Local Producers (Twitter Creek Gardens, Will Grow Farm, Alaska Stems, Eagle Glade Farm, Jakolof Bay Oyster Co.)

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

- Homer & Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District – helped conduct training and community meetings, promoted food hub, hosted educational events, serves on Advisory Planning Committee
- Sustainable Homer, promotion and outreach of the Food Hub, serves on Advisory Planning Committee
- Alaska Marine Conservation Council, helps engage fishermen for participation as producers on the Food Hub, will be a warehouse space partner for the Anchorage expansion; serves on Advisory Planning Committee
- Arctic Harvest Deliveries will be contracted to assist in Anchorage operations.
- Seldovia Village Tribe- assisted and hosted outreach events, provided ferry transportation of Food Hub purchases to Seldovia community, serves on Advisory Planning Committee
- Kachemak Community Center, Alaska’s Wild Emporium, and Christ Lutheran Church- provided reduced rental rates for Food Hub drop off/ pick-up days
- Local Producers (Twitter Creek Gardens, Will Grow Farm, Eagle Glade Farm, Jakolof Bay Oyster Co., Stems Alaska)- serves on Advisory Planning Committee, Steve Dahl of Eagle Glade Farm volunteers to run pick-up day in Soldotna

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

- Food Hub Operations relies heavily on volunteer hours from each of these community partners. The Advisory Council will continue to promote the Food Hub and help with outreach, training, and education.
- Cook Inletkeeper, grant host organization, will continue to incubate the project beyond grant funding.
- Other entities will continue to contribute in similar ways as listed above.

5. **Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?** We used a contractor to design our logo. The contractor produced a timeless logo. We also contracted our professional photography. Photographer conducted 1-3 hour sessions with each Food Hub producer who was interested. The result was a set of high quality photographs that can be used by both the producer and Food Hub in marketing and advertising.



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

- If yes, how did you publicize the results?** We have published sales and participation stats in both our sponsoring organization’s (Cook Inletkeeper) and Food Hub online and printed newsletters and on social media; local newspapers, along with a statewide newspaper, have also printed a story about the results.
- To whom did you publicize the results?** Subscribers and followers of both the Food Hub and Cook Inletkeeper; local and state newspaper readers
- How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?** Our best estimate would be between 8,000-10,000 people, based on the number of followers and subscribers we have.

**\*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). Attached.**

**7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?**

i. **If so, how did you collect the information?** We conducted a mid-season survey of both vendors and producers, to evaluate project effectiveness (included this in previous interim report); for 2017, we conducted a pre-season Producer Survey via Google Forms, along with mid-season and post-season Customer and Producer Surveys.

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

Customer comments include:

- Please add more pick-up locations between Homer and Soldotna
- This is a good community building focus on sustainable farm fare – keep it up
- Need more product diversity.
- Everything is wonderful! I love the food hub, and thank you for being there.
- 92% feel that the Food Hub is off to a great start, while 59% plan to purchase more on the Food Hub as time goes on

Producer comments include:

- As far as software, help was great! All we need now is more people buying, although this year I don't have much to sell.
- 57% feel that the Food Hub is off to a great start, while 36% state they don't think customers are buying enough of their product
- There needs to be a much more aggressive marketing campaign
- I believe it is a good concept and will do what I can to try to make it work.

**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? Yes.**

- **If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?** \$19,978.69 - Funds were used to offset additional expenses that were not requested by the grant, such as the Anchorage expansion trial, conference travel.

**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).**

Think as big as you can. Our grant originally covered just the lower Kenai Peninsula. Almost immediately, we recognized that the Food Hub could be replicated in neighboring communities and added a pick-up site in the central Peninsula. We had to rely on a volunteer site manager to run the site. It did save on costs, but we did not have a consistent advocate for the project in the area. In retrospect, we would have including funding to pay for site managers, as well as for transportation between the two main sites. Partnering with other similarly focused organizations (Food Pantry,

indoor local market) has saved us quite a bit on rental expenses, a cost that was not initially requested.

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

We met all stated goals and outcome measurables. However, we are still not achieving a balanced budget when in terms of Food Hub operations. Our new goal, moving forward, is to create a sustainable, self-sufficient operation, while expanding our reach to more communities.

**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:**

Setting your own deadlines ahead of USDA managers is crucial, to allow for any requested editing or updating. The USDA staff was very helpful in answering questions - don't hesitate to call or email your grant manager. Also, when creating your grant proposal, try to think about every cost that may come up, you won't be able to add it later. Regular check-ins with all stakeholders is very important, to make sure you are meeting all needs and creating lasting relationships.

**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.**

Our hosting organization, Cook Inletkeeper, has committed to continuing to support the Food Hub project, taking on all costs and responsibilities associated with its operation. We moderately estimate that sales of local products on the Food Hub will continue to grow at a rate of 25% each year. We are proposing expansion of the Food Hub, with pick-up sites in at least 2 communities in 2018, with 2 more in 2019. We will be adding a paid, part-time site coordinator position for our Soldotna site in 2018, as well as contracting a part-time driver and offering an un-paid internship, delving into Alaska's local products transportation issues. We have worked with other Food Hubs around the state of Alaska, many of whom used our policy and aggregation models for their own operations. We will continue to support all food hubs around the state, and beyond.

**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?**

It would be great if grantees, with similar projects, could be matched with other grantees to share ideas and garner peer support. As a first time grantee, I found some of the reporting forms unclear. The USDA Staff was always very friendly and helpful, and could always guide me in the right direction. Thank you so much for this amazing opportunity.