

**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>	10/1/2015 – 9/30/17
Authorized Representative Name:	Enrique Palacios
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Recipient Organization Name:	Pittsburg Unified School District Child Nutrition Services
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Contra Costa County Nutrition Services JPA: Furthering Local School Food Procurement and Promotion
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15-LFPP-CA-0068
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Pittsburg/California
Total Awarded Budget:	\$100,000

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: _____

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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: Determine framework of Joint Powers of Agreement (JPA)

Work with partnering districts to determine framework and logistics of agreement, gather usage data, discuss menu items, etc.

- a. Progress Made:

Through the LFPP Grant, a group of 9 school districts from Contra Costa County convened to discuss acting collectively in order to increase their local purchasing power by: drafting a JPA for group purchases, identifying menu items that could be jointly procured, and looking into releasing joint request for proposals (RFPs) for food items. The group included Pittsburg Unified School District (acting as the lead), Antioch Unified School District, Byron Union School District, Liberty Union High School, West Contra Costa County Unified School District, Oakley Union School District, Walnut Creek Unified School District, Brentwood Unified School District, and Mount Diablo Unified School District, representing diverse populations including low income/ low access areas. Usage data was collected by the nonprofit, Fresh Approach, from all school districts to determine suitable items for group purchases or joint RFPs. Over the course of the grant a strong group formed which was not only beneficial for purchasing but also helped participants network and share best practices within their region. When surveyed, fifty-six percent of participants found the group beneficial for networking and 75 percent found it probable that the group would continue beyond the duration of the grant.

- b. Impact on Community:

By working collectively Contra Costa school districts were able to garner a lower price from local producers by increasing the volume of purchases. Keeping the business in the region helped boost the local economy and provide Contra Costa children with fresh nutritious food. Given the limited variety of products produced in Contra Costa County the group expanded purchases to the surrounding regions as well. Strawberries were purchased jointly during the spring of 2017 from Coke Farms, a small California farm in the San Juan Bautista, approximately 100 miles from Contra Costa County, increasing their sales to schools.

- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Form JPA

Work with contracted law firm and school district business offices to develop terms of JPA, draft, and execute the agreement

- a. Progress Made:

Along with the Center for Ecoliteracy and a contracted lawyer, the group worked to develop the framework for a JPA. The group met several times and discussed items of importance and looked at existing JPA structures at districts in California. Upon completion, the document was distributed to school districts for board signatures but only 1 of the 9 had the document signed. The group chose to continue as a cooperative and not pursue the more formal direction of the JPA. The districts have the

JPA and can use it in the future once schools are at a point where they would like to make more continuous purchases together. The drafted JPA and the by-laws are included as Attachments 1 and 2.

b. Impact on Community:

The direct impact cannot be measured from this particular deliverable given that all documents were never signed and used by the group formally. The group did come together to make collective purchases as a cooperative, which did have an impact on the community. Low-income Contra Costa public school students had access to locally grown fruits and local farmers saw an increase in sales to schools through this collective action.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Write Joint Request for Proposals (RFPs)

a. Progress Made:

The contractor Fresh Approach collected usage data from all of the participating school districts to identify items that could be purchased jointly. Approximately 10 produce items were identified for a joint RFP but the group chose not to pursue these items and instead chose dairy as its first joint RFP. Dairy was an easy item to collectively purchase given the daily volume all districts use. The RFP was awarded to Crystal Creamery for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 school years. When surveyed 67 percent of districts said they saved money as a result of the JPA (11 percent spent more and 22 percent were not at the district prior to the joint award and did not know).

b. Impact on Community:

Districts that did save money as a result of the joint RFP were able to redistribute the savings to other products, like local strawberries or asparagus for special events. "Brentwood Union is very thankful to have the support of larger districts when it comes to purchasing. Our district serves about 5,000 meals per day. Next year we anticipate saving about \$8,000 because of the Co-Op, not to mention the legal costs involved in reviewing the RFP/ bid documents and labor costs," remarked Allison Mayer, Food Services Coordinator for Brentwood Union School District. For larger districts the costs were about the same but the act of going out jointly was a big step in helping smaller districts recognize the power of collective purchasing. Some of the food service directors found the work involved in purchasing collectively more time intensive than they thought it would have been. This shows that starting a new system of purchasing can take time in the beginning as everyone is learning the new process. Overall creating a practice of jointly purchasing helps create the motion and intention to continue doing so for future items. Such actions can produce long-term benefits for the community in terms of improved access to fresh California-grown foods and increased economic opportunities for local farming businesses.

iv. Goal/Objective 4: Hold one gathering inviting Contra Costa County school district food service directors and local farmers

a. Progress Made:

In July of 2016 the contracted nonprofit, Fresh Approach, hosted a local farmer Contra Costa County school food service director mixer. The face to face meeting was intended to build relationships and facilitate purchases from local farms for school meals. The farms represented were chosen based on usage data the nonprofit collected from all school districts. Buttercup Farms in Clayton, First Generation Farmers in Brentwood, Cipponeri Family Farms in Turlock, Swank Farms in Hollister, and a produce

distributor from Davi's Produce, attended the event and provided a little background on what they grow and the logistics of working with their businesses. Food service directors were able to ask specific questions regarding pricing, delivery, and availability. The group also visited the new Pittsburg warehouse space to discuss where group purchases could be aggregated and distributed.

b. Impact on Community:

The meeting facilitated contacts with local farmers and future produce purchases by school districts within the Contra Costa area. When surveyed this fall, only 1 of the 9 school districts in attendance followed up and made a sale. Oakley Union Elementary School District developed a new relationship with the distributor Davi's produce. Given the limited number of farms in the immediate area, the lack of future sales suggests that looking beyond the region would be beneficial to develop long-term purchasing relationships. Smaller farms are often unable to provide the prices, continued availability, or quantities that a larger farm or distributor could.

- v. Goal/ Objective 5: Create an aggregation and distribution plan for districts using the PUSD warehouse as primary storage

a. Progress Made:

The group discussed creating an aggregation and distribution plan and visited the space but due to key staff changes, this never fully developed. In addition to this, some of the districts did not have a central kitchen and did not have the capability to make site to site deliveries. For them aggregation and group purchasing was not cost or time saving.

Impact on Community:

No impact on the community can be reported given that the space was never used for aggregation. In the future as the group continues to purchase collectively, the space is still available for use as an aggregation site and this idea can be revisited.

- vi. Goal/Objective 6: Purchase 5000 pounds of locally procured and produced foods each week

a. Progress Made:

Through the joint dairy RFP the schools purchased over 5,000 pounds of locally procured food per week through purchases of milk, yogurt, buttermilk, cottage cheese, sour cream, butter, eggs, orange juice, and almond milk which totaled over 12,500 pounds per week or 653,000 pounds per year. Using dairy as a starting point was a successful way of creating a process for the group to release joint RFPs for other products in the future.

b. Impact on Community:

To date the group has purchased dairy collectively which represents significant savings for smaller school districts and brings more business to creameries located in Modesto and Humboldt Counties in California. For larger districts the price may be about the same but it creates a practice for working together in the future for other items.

- vii. Goal/Objective 7: Create promotional materials and continue events reaching out to school districts, students, parents, and producers.

a. Progress Made:

Blog posts and print promotional materials were created to further promote the groups purchasing of local products. The contractor, the Office of Farm to Fork created blog posts promoting the joint dairy RFP, promoting the farmer mixer, and designed posters to communicate project work. The Office of Farm to Fork also represented the group at state and national conferences, discussing the lessons learned from the project. Examples are attached of the promotional materials and blog posts.

b. Impact on Community:

Showing the success of the project is an important way to motivate others to do the same, as the model created by the group can be replicated by other regions. It is also a way of communicating to local governments the benefits of working collectively, which may produce support through legislation and funding 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, 20__). Include further explanation if necessary.
 - i. Number of direct jobs created:
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: 2
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 0
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: 5 districts.
 - v. Number of new markets established: 1 – Cooperative Purchasing.
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$ 0.00 and increased by 0%.
 - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 3
 - a. Percent Increase: 25%

- 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?

The group convened 9 school districts from Contra Costa County, including Pittsburg Unified School District, Antioch Unified School District, Byron Union School District, Liberty Union High School, West Contra Costa County Unified School District, Oakley Union School District, Walnut Creek Unified School District, Brentwood Unified School District, and Mount Diablo Unified School District which represent diverse populations including low income/ low access areas. Schools with high free and reduced student populations often serve the majority of fruits and vegetables that students consume during a day. Items such as strawberries are sometimes cost prohibitive so working together through a joint RFA means districts can provide more of this flavorful and nutritious product to students. The savings that some districts experience by participating in the joint dairy RFP can also potentially be used to purchase more local produce which could impact low income students with limited access at home to such products. The local purchases also increase sales within the community.

- 4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners?

Food service directors from the 8 additional school districts were the community partners for this grant: Antioch Unified School District, Byron Union School District, Liberty Union High School, West Contra

Costa County Unified School District, Oakley Union School District, Walnut Creek Unified School District, Brentwood Unified School District, and Mount Diablo Unified School District

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

Each food service director greatly contributed to the overall results of the project by donating their time knowledge and most importantly willingness to try something new and unknown. During the beginning of the grant, the group met on average every four to eight weeks and from there communicated regularly via email regarding bid language, items for joint purchases, and general troubleshooting.

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

The largest success accomplished from this grant is a working group of food service directors in Contra Costa County who know one another and feel comfortable working together on future projects. Because of this history the group will likely continue to make joint purchases and release joint RFPs in the future.

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

The California Department of Food and Agriculture Office of Farm to Fork acted as the Project Manager for the group which included organizing all meetings, coordinating with Pittsburg staff and district food service directors, researching existing JPAs, RFPs, and buying cooperatives, and creating promotional materials to promote local farms and the group. Fresh Approach surveyed all school districts to determine which produce items should be included in a joint RFP and worked to connect farmers to individual districts. Fresh Approach also organized the farmer/school food service director mixer last summer. The Center for Ecoliteracy acted as the lead in drafting the JPA specific to the group's needs. They worked directly with the districts to ensure the document adhered to each school's policies.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*
- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?

The project was publicized by the Office of Farm to Fork through blog posts, social media posts, promotional posters, and included in its 2015/16 and 2016/17 annual reports, which were distributed to all stakeholders, including state legislative members. The Office also represented the group and shared the group's work at the Childhood Obesity Conference in San Diego in June of 2017, at a USDA Farm to School Gathering in Baltimore in September 2017, and at the California Small Farm Conference in November of 2017.

- ii. To whom did you publicize the results?

Office of Farm to Fork stakeholders, academic researchers, community and business leaders, education communities, early childhood and after school providers, food system professionals, health care professionals, parent and youth-based organizations, parks and recreation planners and providers, philanthropic leaders, local and State health department staff, national public health entities and organizations, community-based organizations, policymakers, public health professionals, registered dietitians, farmers, local, state, and national government agencies, and NGOs.

- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

Small Farm 230 participants
Childhood 1,500
USDA 93

***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?

A final survey was sent to all food service directors who participated as part of the group through Survey Monkey. The survey measured positive and negative effects of the group, the status of the JPA within their district, follow up on connections made at the farmer mixer, savings associated with the joint dairy bid, and interest in pursuing future group ventures. Overall participants were happy to be part of the group and saw benefits of its formation, despite the fact that certain aspects of the grant did not work out as they were originally envisioned. These results are included as Attachment 8.

ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

Mount Diablo noted that they do not have distribution to all their school sites so the program was not a good fit for their district. Brentwood Union shared that they found the networking and connection to farmers that the grant brought, very beneficial to their district, but did not see the importance of the JPA. West Contra Costa noted that it was a very positive grant but did not have the support of their district at that time to fully engage and support efforts the way they would have hoped to have. Overall the districts were grateful for the structure it created and see working together in the future.

iii. 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? No. JPA was not established; however, cooperative purchasing group is in place. No fees have been assessed at this time. Grant funds were used to establish administrative procedures for a possible JPA.

8. 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 magnitude of this project took a team approach but also allowed for individual expertise to lead when necessary. Over the course of the grant 4 of the 9 food service directors changed and 1 director was out on maternity leave for a number of months. Because of these key personnel changes, knowledge and time were often lost between new directors. "The learning curve was steep so I really appreciated the patience of our partners as I came on board midstream for this grant. The partnerships needed for the success of this project was amazing to be a part of. The commitment from everyone, the passion shared for the better of students, and the overall professionalism of this group was wonderful to be a part of," remarked Pittsburg Unified Child Nutrition Director Angelia Nava.

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

All goals were met aside from signing the JPA and using the warehouse space at Pittsburg to aggregate group purchases. As described above, based on the needs of each district, these goals would not have been beneficial to some districts. For this reason the group chose to focus on work that would be the most effective such as releasing a joint dairy RFP and forming a strong working group for sharing best practices.

- 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:

Be aware that key staff changes will slow the process down. Each time a stakeholder leaves, there is time and knowledge loss. New personnel can also change the direction of their program which may not fit in with the goals and objectives of the group. In addition, when working with a large group representing districts of various sizes, it is important to be aware of the fact that what works for one will not necessarily work for another. Despite this, there is often a middle ground or a solution for meeting half way. Finally, the group found that it was important to broaden the geographical region they sourced from for the project given the limited availability of farms within their region.

And above all, it was important to be patient and flexible, an element present in all of these lessons learned.

9. 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.

The efforts and work put into the grant opened the door for the group to create multiple cooperative purchasing groups for dairy and produce. This enables smaller surrounding districts to pool usage numbers to receive a better price as a whole. The group will continue to provide this support to the smaller districts as it is a goal to ensure they have access to pricing that supports quality food and fiscal responsibility for their programs.

- 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?

As a group, directors have learned the various obstacles and hindrances that districts often face. This has changed the direction of the project slightly but also helped the group learn from one another and problem solve. Currently the group is working on pooling data to see the real money savings by district and as a cooperative as a whole. Their goal in the future is to move forward with an additional cooperative purchasing for food and non-food items.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: JPA Draft

Attachment 2: JPA Bylaws

Attachment 3: Blog post on Joint Milk RFP
Attachment 4: Blog Post on School Food Service/Farmer Mixer
Attachment 5: Promotional Materials
Attachment 6: Office of Farm to Fork 2015/16 Annual Report
Attachment 7: Office of Farm to Fork 2016/17 Annual Report
Attachment 8: Final Stakeholder Survey