

**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](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>	September 29, 2015– September 29, 2017
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	Nicolas de la Fuente
<b>Authorized Representative Phone:</b>	480 309 3481
<b>Authorized Representative Email:</b>	nfuente@dbg.org
<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Technical Assistance Partnership of Arizona
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Spaces of Opportunity
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15LFPPAZ0055
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2015
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Phoenix, AZ
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$100,000.00

LFPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

Different individual: Name: \_\_\_\_\_; Email: \_\_\_\_\_; Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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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: By September 29<sup>th</sup> 2017, to create a community-based farm that produces a minimum of 75,000 pounds of fresh produce annually.
    - a. Progress Made: We reached out to our local Cooperative Extension and also through our own networks to build a vibrant group of farmers ranging from Iraq, to Lebanon, to Mexico and south Phoenix. Our group of farmers meet on a monthly basis and report back to the managing committee of the project on all progress made at the farm. We have now completed four growing seasons of cover crops on 8.5 acres of the Spaces of Opportunity farm. USDA LFPP funds were not used for production activities. USDA LFPP funds were used for the aggregating and processing component of the work, but I am including the whole process in this narrative because it is the totality of our work. We were and are rotating cover crops with vegetable crops--initially starting on two acres, growing to four acres to 8.5 acres. We under-shot this goal by a long run, not taking into account the time needed to amend the soil from 20 years of fallow neglect. We will realistically meet our goal of 75,000 pounds of produce in the spring of 2019 with several rounds of cover crop, composting and experienced farmers working the land. Building upon our third quarter report, we produced 7,000 pounds of produce. As you will see in the next section, an unrealistic timeline for efficient production obviously led to low sales. Our farming team is growing, we have purchased a new tractor and “walking tractor,” and all 8.5 acres have had at least one round of cover crops grown. The tractor was purchased with funds raised by individual donors, and I am including it in this report because it is relevant to our progress in relation to this grant. We’ve begun amending the soil with internally produced compost, adding amendments to the irrigation water, and established a weekly farmers market. All of these steps took longer than expected, and our goal to produce a minimum of 75,000 pounds of produce will surely take place by year four of the project.
    - b. Impact on Community: In the winter of 2015 when we first received a one-year lease from the school district that owns the land, it was a struggle. In a low-income school district, promises come and go. The school board was rightfully diligent to question our plans to develop 19 acres. We now hold a ten-year lease and at our November 2017 board meeting the entire board was ecstatic to learn about our intention to break ground in January 2018 to build the shade structure covering south Phoenix’s first farmers market. On a macro level, we are creating energy for larger such projects to crystalize across the Phoenix metropolitan area.
  - ii. Goal/Objective 2: By September 29<sup>th</sup> 2017, to generate \$100,000 in annual revenue through establishing business relationships with a minimum of five entities, including food banks, health centers, local restaurants and grocery stores.

- a. Progress Made: Building upon our third quarter numbers, the Spaces farm generated \$5,000.00 in revenue. The big lesson here was that we grossly underestimated the timeline to build a community farm and nurture both soil and farmer to create an efficient operation. The \$100,000 revenue goal is certainly a realistic goal that we are confident we will reach; however, instead of year two, we are realistically looking at year four or year five. If anything, we understand the importance of long-term support of these types of projects knowing that farming unlike other businesses takes a long time to reach peak revenue streams. Without long-term investments into this work, urban farms such as Spaces would not have a fair shot of getting established.
  - b. Impact on Community: Building culture takes time. While farmers markets are well-established in wealthier communities, we know we are trying to reinvigorate a culture that has been deconstructed through urbanization. Our sales are based on building a demand within the local community thus creating a viable market to sustain the bulk of our sales. As reported in quarter two and three, we have shifted our focus to building out our on-site farmers market rather than pursuing a plethora of venues outside of the core markets we have established. As our farm has grown, so has the participation in the farmers market, which we set up every Saturday. The community as a generalization is thrilled about the transformation of this nearly 20-acre empty plot into a thriving community farm and gathering space.
- iii. Goal/Objective 3: By November 1, 2015, to install male/ female porta johns, hand washing station and onsite storage for tools, equipment, etc.
  - a. Progress Made: While we have utilized a Porta John for the interim, we are happy to report that our construction plans, set to begin in January 2018, include connecting to power, water, and building a bathroom, improving the street, building a parking lot as well as a cool storage and washing station for the farmers to wash and store produce. USDA LFPP are not, and were never used for construction. All funds relating to construction have been secured through separate, private foundations. I include this piece in our report because it is fundamental to the success of the farm and this project, and ultimately the funds used by this grant to compliment and further our work. In May of 2018, we will host our second fundraiser to build the farmers market structure. No funds from USDA LFPP will be used for this fundraiser. I only state that we will have this fundraiser because it is fundamental to the success of this overall project beyond this grant, which is complementary to the overall success of our project. We are thrilled to provide the community with these necessities, which will be transformational to the farm, and surely increase participation in our farming, gardening, and farmer's market programs.
  - b. Impact on Community: The beginning of construction on the site lets the community know loud and clear, Spaces of Opportunity is a long-term project. While we bring on more farmers, grow more produce, and build out the infrastructure, we are providing for a more welcoming space with shade, water, power, and bathrooms, which are essential for school and community participation.
- iv. Goal/Objective 4: By September 29<sup>th</sup> 2017 to create a minimum of 35 part-time or full time positions attached the work of Spaces of Opportunity.

- a. Progress Made: We have created 20 part time positions attached to the work of Spaces of Opportunity. Many of these positions were created in the unforeseen amount of labor needed to run a successful farmers market that includes crop planning, farmer communication with the market, harvesting, washing, aggregation and processing protocols as well as the set up and tear down of the farmers market. No USDA LFPP funds have been used to promote the farmers market.
    - b. Impact on the Community: Of course, part time jobs that are created for the community are really good, but resulting from those jobs focused on communication, outreach, aggregating and processing produce, is a vibrant farmers market that is created for the community every Saturday. No funds from the USDA LFPP have been used for promoting the farmers market.
2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2015). Include further explanation if necessary.
  - i. Number of direct jobs created: 10
  - ii. Number of jobs retained: 10
  - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 15
  - iv. Number of markets expanded: 4
  - v. Number of new markets established: NA
  - vi. Market sales increased by \$2,000 and increased by 166%.
  - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 8
    - a. Percent Increase:
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 largest selling market outside of the onsite market has been the Mountain Park Health Center Market where an ethnically diverse population of low-income residents seek medical care. The connection to the projects guiding principles around health and wellness makes for the Mountain Park Health Center Market to be our marquee outside market and thus facilitates healthy eating with overall well-being.
4. Discuss your community partnerships.
  - i. Who are your community partners? Our partners are the Roosevelt School District that owns the land, the Desert Botanical Garden, and Cultivate South Phoenix, which is a group of seven grassroots non-profit organizations performing work in south Phoenix.
  - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project? We are contracting with our partners in Cultivate South Phoenix to carry out the work on the land, and the Roosevelt School District owns the land and provides academic opportunities for the surrounding schools. The Desert Botanical Garden has taken on a management role of the project.
  - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant? We are "all in" with the Spaces project for the long haul, and they will continue to develop and manage the on-the-ground projects at Spaces.
5. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? Yes, we contracted with our partner organizations from Cultivate South

Phoenix to carry out the various different components of the work.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?\*

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? We regularly present at local and national conferences on the Spaces of Opportunity project, but we have yet to publish our results.
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results? n/a
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? We have worked with roughly 40 local businesses and organizations over the past two years and seen roughly 150 individuals participating on projects on the land on a monthly basis.

\*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? Feedback has been collected through various venues such as school board meetings, door knocking, and community/school participation. Across the board, the community is happy to see the transformation of the land. Critical feedback we have received has included lack of amenities i.e. physical bathrooms for local school kids, washing stations for the farmers, and informational signage informing the community how they can get involved. We have taken that feedback seriously and incorporated all of those requests into our construction set to begin in January 2018.
- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? We learned we need basic infrastructure to get classes of students onto the land. We need bathrooms, hand washing stations and drinking fountains. Missing that infrastructure has led to a low number of official school visits to the farm, but we know that will increase once those amenities are built.

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?
  - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? Approximately \$7,000 was raised during the 2-year award period and was used primarily for stipends for individuals working in the Farmers Markets. For instance, this money was used to pay workers involved in the aggregating and processing of produce that is sold at our weekly farmers market.

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. Summarize any lessons learned. Draw from positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed). The main positive lesson we learned has centered on procuring proper mechanical equipment, and setting up clearly defined farming plots to entice new farmers are fundamental to launching quickly. Because we

learned that lesson later rather than sooner, our timeline suffered a bit. That then leads to the biggest lesson we learned and that is to have a realistic timeline for building a farm. I think everyone on our team had an unrealistic idea of the time it would take to get the soil healthy, and systems worked out properly. However, the lesson learned for us and for the larger community is that, you need to communicate as clearly as possible that timelines in the farming world are likely to be delayed beyond ambitious goals of ambitious people.

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: Our numeric goals were not met simply because we completely misunderstood a realistic timeline to build the farm and create efficient systems. The lesson is of course to re-work a more realistic timeline, but also that not achieving financial independence in the first three years is not uncommon and that most importantly, you want to get the community and stakeholders to feel ownership of the project so that you buy yourself the time to achieve economic stability.
- 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: Biggest lesson is to set realistic timelines alongside your goals and build in systems that account for bumps on the path to progress. Another key component of any project that deals with so many different partners and stakeholders is to immediately establish open systems of communication between teams to avoid backpedaling or impeding any work because of lack of communication. The many different components of an urban farming endeavor like Spaces requires constant communication between farmers, community members, non-profits, donors, funders, school officials, and students. With so many stakeholders, also comes different entities/systems of accountability; so to ensure for smooth project growth, it is imperative to get those systems of communication developed at the forefront if you want to achieve sustained growth.

#### 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. Most importantly, we can now share a more realistic timeline alongside our goals to create a thriving 19-acre community food hub. We have shared these lessons with various different funding entities and continued to chisel down our focus on the farming components of the property. We have the legal maximum with our lease agreement and we will begin construction in January 2018 on the first phase of infrastructural improvements. We are also currently finishing our 5-year business plan which has incorporated the results of this grant and applied them into a plan that will help us reach realistic goals and timelines over the next five years.
- 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? If possible, I think technical expertise provided by the USDA would help with the farming components of Spaces. If the USDA has access to soil specialists that are focused on soils of the southwest, we could certainly use some help to get our land producing at maximum capacity. We will continue to learn and grow from this and become more

knowledgeable in the area of soil preparation and yield. Specifically, we are going to reflect on lessons learned from the work of this grant on aggregating and processing of produce and we are going to refine that process and try to be as efficient and centralized as possible. We have a farmer retreat as a next step to find the most efficient way to aggregate and process and a unified team of farmers.