

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

Report Date Range:	September 30, 2014-September 29, 2016
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Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Faith in Food: Forging New Partnerships with Houses of Worship to Strengthen and Sustain Farmers' Markets in Philadelphia's Food Deserts
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Project City/State:	Philadelphia, PA
Total Awarded Budget:	\$96,300

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. Project Goals and Objectives for *Faith in Food: Forging New Partnerships with Houses of Worship to Strengthen and Sustain Farmers' Markets in Philadelphia's Food Deserts:*

i. Goal/Objective 1: Increase fruit and vegetable consumption among low-income residents in food deserts.

a. Progress Made: To encourage consumption of fruits and vegetables, The Food Trust led outreach efforts to reach neighborhood residents surrounding five faith-based farmers markets in Philadelphia, PA. A keystone of these efforts is The Food Trust's SNAP incentive, Philly Food Bucks, which can be redeemed for fresh produce at farmers markets. The Philly Food Bucks model distributes a \$2 coupon for every \$5 spent using an EBT card on SNAP-eligible items at markets.

To promote the Philly Food Bucks incentive, and to increase fruit and vegetable consumption among lower-income residents, The Food Trust partnered with dozens of social service organizations over this two-year project to distribute packets of Philly Food Bucks worth \$6 to SNAP-eligible families and current SNAP recipients. Over the two years of the project, \$10,754 worth of fruits and vegetables were purchased with Philly Food Bucks distributed by social service organizations.

In addition, programming on-site had a significant influence on fruit and vegetable consumption. Food Trust staff conducted monthly market tours at the five Faith in Food markets to acquaint community members with their neighborhood markets and educate them on the benefits of buying local produce with SNAP and Philly Food Bucks. Customers not only learned about shopping for fresh produce, but also proper food storage, cooking tips, and ways to stretch their food dollars with SNAP, Food Bucks, and FMNP vouchers. After participating in this guided shopping experience, attendees were provided \$6 packets of Philly Food Bucks. From responses to a farmers market tour survey, 43.2% of participants received SNAP benefits within the past year. Thus, our outreach efforts were successful at reaching people receiving food assistance benefits.

The most successful farmers market tours of the two-year initiative occurred during Customer Appreciation Days, which were strategically created by The Food Trust's farmers market team to increase sales at market during historically slower months of the season. Sales trends over the past several years have shown that sales dip after Labor Day each year. Customer Appreciation Days were hosted in early September 2016, and giveaways, such as multi-colored cutting boards designed to promote food safety, and farmers market tours helped to ensure that the markets received a crucial boost in sales.

Another successful initiative which engages shoppers at market and increases fruit and vegetable consumption among low-income residents is our cooking demonstration programming. During our cooking demonstrations, which occur multiple times during market hours, trained nutrition educators show simple steps to creating a healthy recipe, while using fresh produce from the farmers at the market. In addition to learning a healthy recipe and participating in a short, interactive nutrition lesson, all participants receive a taste of the prepared recipe and \$4 in Philly Food Bucks. Due to their popularity, the length of the cooking demonstration season was extended an additional four weeks during the 2016 farmers market season at three of the Faith in Food farmers markets: 58th and Chester, Common Ground, and Oxford Circle.

- b. *Impact on Community:*** Since the Faith in Food initiative began in 2014, notable strides have been made at increasing fruit and vegetable consumption among lower-income residents at these five farmers markets. Customer surveys conducted annually at The Food Trust's farmers markets have shown the results of this impact. In 2016, 56.1% of survey respondents reported that they have participated in at least one food assistance program in the past year, compared to only 28.2% in the baseline 2014 survey. Such an increase suggests that The Food Trust has been successful at outreach to SNAP and Farmers Market Nutrition Program Senior and WIC recipients. 64.4% of 2016 respondents indicated that they have increased their fruit and vegetable intake since visiting the farmers market, compared to 56.8% in 2014. In addition to the increased availability of fresh produce that the farmers markets provide, market associates and nutrition educators likely played a key role in increasing fruit and vegetable consumption. This 2016 season, 86% of customers stated that they received information about healthy eating while at market and 73.9% reported observing a cooking demonstration at market (compared to 69.6% and 46.2% in 2014 respectively).

Attendees who responded to the farmers market tour surveys also expressed positive feedback on the programming. In 2016, 61% of surveyed attendees reported that they learned more about choosing healthy food from the tours. For nearly half of the attendees (49.1%), this was their first time ever visiting the farmers market. The majority of participants indicated that they were "likely" or "very likely" to return to the farmers market within the next 30 days (72.2% of respondents).

Across all of the Faith in Food farmers markets, the main source of Philly Food Bucks redeemed was from incentives distributed to participants after the cooking demonstrations. Over the two year period, \$25,235 in sales at these farmers markets came from Philly Food Bucks distributed at cooking demonstrations alone. From responses to

the 2016 cooking demonstration survey, 77.9% of customers reported that they will eat more fruits and vegetables after this workshop. Similarly, 78.7% of respondents said that they would prepare the demonstrated recipe at home. Examples of popular recipes included corn-zucchini salad and kale Caesar salad.

ii. Goal/Objective 2: Strengthen the direct-market sales of local farmers through connecting them with faith-based farmers markets.

- a. Progress Made:* Philly Food Bucks, The Food Trust's SNAP incentive program at farmers markets, increases the purchasing power of SNAP recipients while simultaneously helping local farmers sell perishable fruits and vegetables. Farmers participating in the Faith in Food project benefited from the additional revenue provided by SNAP sales and Philly Food Bucks redemption.

While SNAP sales did not increase over the baseline across all five Faith in Food farmers markets, substantial gains were seen at two of these markets. At the 26th and Allegheny Farmers Market in North Philadelphia, SNAP sales increased by 130% in 2016 over the 2014 baseline. SNAP sales at the 4th and Lehigh Farmers Market in North Philadelphia experienced a 70% increase in 2016 over 2014 baseline sales. Notably, the anchor farmer at both of these markets remained the same for each season of the project, which we believe is a crucial component to a successful market. As customers grew familiar with both the farmer and the market, SNAP customer participation rose.

At the Oxford Circle and 58th and Chester markets, the anchor farmers changed during the course of the project, which may have contributed to a slight decline in SNAP sales. When a new farmer is introduced to a community, there is an adjustment period as the farmer learns the community's fruit and vegetable preferences, and establishes ties with community members and customers. Some farmers were able to make this adjustment easily, and others required more time. At the 58th and Chester Farmers Market, for example, the anchor farmer changed each season. During the 2015 season, SNAP sales fell by nearly half. With a new farmer taking over in 2016, SNAP sales began to rise, but still were a few hundred dollars shy of the baseline year. At Oxford Circle, a new farmer vending for the 2016 season coincided with SNAP sales dipping by 49% compared to 2014. This farmer, however, experienced strong overall sales, and even left his "day job," to vend full-time at farmers markets in 2016.

Changes to the timing of markets also impacted sales. At the Common Ground Farmers Market adjacent to Congregation Rodeph Shalom, SNAP sales initially showed a considerable increase from 2014 to 2015 when sales increased by 135%. With a shift from being a Sunday afternoon market to a Wednesday evening farmers market, fewer vendors participated, thus impacting product variety and, subsequently, sales. Ultimately, SNAP sales at Common Ground decreased by 41% since 2014 and The Food Trust and Congregation Rodeph Shalom continue to discuss overall strategies to strengthen the market's presence in the community.

Similarly to SNAP sales, Philly Food Bucks did not experience a rise in use across all five farmers markets since 2014. Out of the five markets, an increase of use was seen at two: the 4th and Lehigh Farmers Market in North Philadelphia and the 58th and Chester Farmers Market in West Philadelphia. The 58th & Chester market saw the biggest increase: 42% higher Philly Food Buck sales in 2016 versus the 2014 baseline. Enhanced programming at this farmers market, such as the extension of the popular cooking demonstrations by four weeks into September 2016 and blood-pressure screenings provided by Lankenau Medical Associates, may have promoted this increase in Philly Food Bucks use.

Philly Food Bucks sales at the other three farmers markets did not increase. A key contributor to this was that the value of Philly Food Buck packets distributed at cooking demonstrations decreased from \$6 in 2014 to \$4 in subsequent years. Piloted first in 2014, cooking demonstrations proved to be more popular than originally anticipated and redemption of Philly Food Bucks skyrocketed past budgetary expectations. The Food Trust's farmers market program thoughtfully decided to distribute a smaller value through this channel and worked with the team of nutrition educators to craft a script for the cooking demonstrations that explained how people could earn more Philly Food Bucks through SNAP purchases. Even with the decrease from \$6 to \$4, redemption rates of Philly Food Bucks remained steady at 77.5% over the course of the project.

Proactively seeking new strategies for strengthening sales for local farmers, representatives from The Food Trust attended the Small Farms Conference in Virginia Beach, VA, in September 2016. At this conference, staff learned of new economic opportunities and new strategies for local food promotion that could be beneficial to the small farmers that attend Philadelphia farmers markets. For example, a presentation from Cornell University researchers highlighted valuable information and guidance for new farmers and urban farmers.

- b. *Impact on Community:*** The Food Trust's SNAP incentive may be a major consideration for shoppers, and subsequently strengthen the direct-market sales for farmers. For customers surveyed during the 2016 season, 76.3% reported that Philly Food Bucks were "Important" or "Very Important" in their decision to shop at a farmers market.
- iii. *Goal/Objective 3: Assist congregations of all faiths and denominations to better serve and engage their congregants and local communities through learning how to host farmers markets to increase access to fresh, affordable food and nutrition education.***

 - a. *Progress Made:*** Along with several organizations and people seeking services, The Food Trust participated in the second annual Good Food For All conference, organized by the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger to share healthy food access resources and held in Philadelphia, PA in May 2016. During a panel discussion with other food access organizations, The Food Trust presented on the Faith in Food project. Staff outlined strategies for engaging congregants and hosting farmers markets at houses of worship, which were drawn from our best practices and lessons learned during the grant period.

In July 2016, The Food Trust collaborated with Partners for Sacred Places to host a workshop entitled, “Faith in Food: Partnering with Congregations to Sustain and Strengthen Communities.” Held at the First Presbyterian Church in Center City, Philadelphia, this workshop highlighted ways congregations could work with farmers or food access organizations to provide food resources to their neighborhood. Additionally, Partners for Sacred Places introduced some of the ways that houses of worship could financially benefit from resources they already have, such as renting out their kitchens to food entrepreneurs. Most importantly, this workshop provided a forum for congregations and food advocates to discuss how they could begin working directly together.

Building on the success of the July workshop, The Food Trust and Partners for Sacred Places presented a webinar for farmers and market managers looking to work with faith communities in September 2016. “Food is a part of the life of congregations,” proclaimed Joshua Castaño, Senior Program Manager at Partners for Sacred Places, during the webinar on Faith in Food: Partnering with Congregations to Sustain and Strengthen Communities through Farmers Markets. Hosted by the Farmers Market Coalition, this webinar shared key considerations, highlighted case studies, discussed mission alignment, and outlined potential impacts to the congregations in terms of volunteer commitments and physical space requirements. The webinar concluded with succinct next steps that farmers and market managers could pursue. With half of the attendees reporting that they currently work with faith communities and another 43% of attendees on the webinar indicating that they would like to work with a faith community in the future, this template for action could have an immediate effect.

As the culmination of these congregation-to-farmer activities, Food Trust staff developed two guides to provide guidance to congregations and to farmers. Drafted during winter 2016, *Faith in Food: A Resource Guide for Farmers* and *Faith in Food: A Resource Guide for Congregations* was completed in collaboration with Partners for Sacred Places.

- b. *Impact on Community:*** At the Good Food For All conference, an audience consisting of food pantry operators, urban farmers, social service providers, and other food justice activists attended. During the “New Paths to Affordable Fresh Food in Your Community” panel discussion, approximately 20 people were in attendance.

At the “Faith in Food: Partnering with Congregations to Sustain and Strengthen Communities” workshop, 31 attendees participated, including representatives from several houses of worship of various denominations (including 19th Street Baptist Church, Arch Street United Methodist Church, Church of the Advocate, Holy Apostles and The Mediator Episcopal Church, Metropolitan Baptist Church, Holy Communion Lutheran Church, Tindley Temple United Methodist Church, New Vision United Methodist Church, Solid Rock United Methodist Church, and Wharton Wesley United Methodist Church), faith-based organizations (including the Jewish Relief Agency and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia’s Nutritional Development Services), urban farmers, and city agencies.

Out of 79 registrants, the Faith in Food webinar had 46 attendees. The Farmers Market Coalition hosted the recording of the presentation on their website, where it reached 44 more views.

2. Overall Impact of Project on Beneficiaries:

- i. Number of direct jobs created: N/A
- ii. Number of jobs retained: N/A
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: N/A
- iv. Number of markets expanded: N/A
- v. Number of new markets established: N/A
- vi. Market sales increased by \$548.88 in SNAP benefits and increased by 100% at two of the farmers markets.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 12
Percent Increase: The number of farmers did not increase; rather, the farms participating changed seasonally at some markets depending on availability.

3. Customer Base Expansion: While The Food Trust consistently strives to reach additional lower-income/low access populations, our customer survey results show that we have made continued progress over the two years of the project. From responses to customer surveys, the number of farmers market customers who had received food assistance in the past year increased by 27.9% from 2014 to 2016. Farmers market tours and cooking demonstrations at these five farmers markets may have played a key role in drawing in more SNAP shoppers.

4. Community Partnerships: The Food Trust's farmers market program benefited from partnership with several organizations and institutions. Of highest importance to this project was the collaboration with the five congregations: The Common Place (housing New Spirit Community Presbyterian Church), Devereux United Methodist Church, Congregation Rodeph Shalom, Oxford Circle Mennonite Church, and Visitation B.V.M. Catholic Church. Through this Faith in Food initiative, staff from The Food Trust had the opportunity to form and nurture these collaborations, which in turn benefitted the farmers as a whole. At the 26th and Allegheny Farmers Market, for example, parishioners played an integral role in assisting and promoting the farmers market. A member of the church's choir was a regular at the market, occasionally helping the farmer sell during a rush of customers.

Partnerships with social service organizations reaching neighborhoods with Faith in Food farmers markets also bolstered farmers' sales and customers' attendance. Packets of Philly Food Bucks were distributed through these community partnerships to encourage SNAP recipients to use their benefits at markets and to provide access to healthy, local food. The Food Trust worked with dozens of community partners on distribution of Philly Food Bucks, and a few organizations were especially critical to the success of reaching lower-income, lower-access people. These organizations include the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger, HACE Community Development Corporation, Southwest Community Development Corporation, FJ Meyers Recreation Center, Pennrose Management, Project HOME, nutritionists from the Philadelphia Department of Public Health's network of health centers, WIC offices in Philadelphia, and the Supportive Older Women's Network.

- 5. Work Contributed by Contractors:** During this project, The Food Trust contracted with Partners for Sacred Places. A national organization that advocates for active community use of religious properties, Partners for Sacred Places has a unique role of connecting houses of worship to the larger needs of the community and helps to identify opportunities in their neighborhood. For the Faith in Food project, Partners for Sacred Places aided in developing *Faith in Food: A Resource Guide for Congregations*. With their unique background with the Food in Sacred Places initiative that connected community churches in underserved Philadelphia neighborhoods to nutrition and wellness projects, Partners for Sacred Places helped to create a guide that goes beyond the benefits of establishing a farmers market. Their contribution led to a resource guide that combines the strengths of both organizations: expertise on farmers markets and nutrition education from The Food Trust and the inner-workings of faith communities and community organizing from Partners for Sacred Places.

With close ties to the houses of worship adjacent to the farmers markets and faith communities across the city, Partners for Sacred Places organized and hosted a successful Faith in Food workshop in collaboration with The Food Trust in July 2016 at First Presbyterian Church in Center City, Philadelphia. Building upon their organization of the Faith in Food workshop, Partners for Sacred Places shared their expertise in the September 2016 webinar targeted to farmers and market managers.

For the graphic design of the two guides, The Food Trust contracted with Northfound Design. Northfound Design created attractive, easy-to-read designs that were customized to fit the needs of the key audiences (i.e. congregations, farmers and vendors and farmers market-supportive organizations).

- 6. Publicized Results:** To publicize lessons learned and a model for developing similar projects, two guides were crafted in collaboration with Partners for Sacred Places. *Faith in Food: A Resource Guide for Farmers* and *Faith in Food: A Resource Guide for Congregations* were created, which The Food Trust promoted through its social media and direct marketing: the *Fresh Times* newsletter (reaching 7120 recipients), Twitter (reaching 35,600 followers), and Facebook (reaching 13,199 followers). Beyond The Food Trust's network, these two guides were shared with the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG), the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), the Farmers Market Coalition, the Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network (PA-WAgN), the Philadelphia Urban Farmers Network Google Group, and Tufts University's NE Food email list.

7. Feedback from Community and Stakeholders:

- i. How did you collect the information?** At each farmers market, staff and volunteers from The Food Trust collected customer surveys during the late summer and into early autumn. Developed by The Food Trust's Research and Evaluation Department led by Dr. Bill McKinney, this 28-question survey seeks feedback on the farmers markets and Philly Food Bucks, asks about fruit and vegetable consumption, and asks demographic and health questions.

At the farmers market tours, a selection of participants were given a 19-question survey also developed by The Food Trust's Research and Evaluation Team. In addition to basic demographic information, this survey poses questions focusing on views on the farmers market, likelihood of returning to shop, takeaways from the tours, and overall fruit and vegetable consumption.

The cooking demonstration survey posed eight questions and was developed in conjunction with *Just Say Yes to Fruits & Vegetables* for the PA Nutrition Educators Tracks programming.

- ii. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?** As detailed under Question 1b, feedback revealed that the project positively impacted customers' fruit and vegetable consumption. Beyond the overall increase in fruit and vegetable consumption, the project also had an impact on the variety of produce consumed: 64.5% of shoppers surveyed had tried a new fruit or vegetable since coming to the farmers market (just 36.3% had in 2014). Additionally, 41.4% of customer survey respondents traveled three blocks or less to travel to the farmers market, indicating that The Food Trust had a direct reach to the community around the market and the congregations. Below are some specific comments about the FMPP project in response to our customer survey.
- "Admiring our church to have the veg and fruit stand here."
 - "It is very convenient to me to get fruits and vegetables when they are here every year."
 - "This market is great for the community."
 - "The quality is fantastic."
 - "Keep up the good work we need these good foods."
 - "Ms. Anita from farmers market is a pleasure." – Anita is the farmer at the 26th & Allegheny and 4th & Lehigh markets.

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
If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? - Not applicable

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. **Lessons Learned from FMPP Project:** For many faith-based organizations, food is a key component of their mission, whether it is feeding those in need, housing a farmers market or supporting a community garden. Food enables communities to connect and relate to members, neighbors, businesses and even other congregations.

During the FMPP project, we learned that congregations are uniquely positioned to provide programming around food due to their access to resources such as green space,

kitchens, people willing to volunteer, monetary assets or relationships with organizations working in food justice. Many congregations are rethinking the way they approach food programing, with the goal of creating long-term solutions to hunger and food injustice.

One of the most important aspects in running a successful farmers markets is having a champion of the market in the community. Because rural farmers selling at urban markets can be perceived as community outsiders, community champions are necessary for providing cultural context as well as promotion to key stakeholders in the community. Working with the five congregations ensured built-in champions at these five farmers markets, and we found connections with the community and farmers were made in a more seamless way when compared to other Food Trust markets.

In order to ensure this connection continues to thrive, frequent communication between congregations, farmers, and market managers is vital, but it can be challenging to keep up during the course of the season. At some of the locations, we noticed it was sometimes challenging to get the level of volunteerism and program participation that was originally desired by The Food Trust and faith-based organizations. Because congregants are volunteering their time and energy, sometimes market tours or presentations to the congregants had limited attendance. What could be beneficial is to have larger supportive groups that serve on a committee, as was the case with the Congregation Rodeph Shalom, or to offer stipends to cover some of the congregants' time and efforts.

- ii. ***Lessons Learned from Expected Goals and Outcomes:*** While some farmers experienced an increase in sales, SNAP and Philly Food Bucks sales did not increase across all markets. Many factors impact these sales, including any changes in SNAP issuance in the neighborhood, weather, and the addition of other food retail in the community. For example, at three of these farmers markets, the anchor vendors changed over the course of the project, which we believe impacted sales and attendance at the markets. When an anchor vendor changes at a market, the product availability changes and may or may not always meet customer expectations with respect to pricing and variety. When conducting farmer recruitment, The Food Trust staff works to find vendors with product mixes that are culturally appropriate for the neighborhood and supports them throughout the season to meet both the community's and the farm's needs.

The best method for addressing these changes and the impact on market sales is a strong communications plan that includes promotion of the farmers market to the neighborhood and key community groups as well as opportunities for community feedback to identify any product needs at the farmers market.

- iii. ***Lessons Learned to Share with Others Looking to Implement a Similar Project:*** For groups looking to implement a similar project, the two Faith in Food resource guides will provide helpful information for farmers or farmers market coordinators to decide if such a partnership is suitable. For example, we recommend looking into the following areas:
 - a. ***Location of Faith-Based Establishment*** – For other groups looking to start a similar project, we suggest keeping the location of the faith-based organization in mind. The

building is sometimes a neighborhood landmark, which can be a great way for people in the community to identify a market location. Additionally, available parking at the establishment will help both farmers and vendors during the project.

- b. *Use of Space*** – Partners considering a project like this should consider opening the market during times of high foot traffic. They should also be aware of whether or not they will have access to storage, kitchens, restrooms or other facilities within the building, as this will greatly benefit the program.
- c. *Potential for Programming*** – When working with a house of worship, it is ideal to partner with one whose programming and mission is open to the operation of a farmers market. For example, consider operating the market concurrently or consecutively with a regularly occurring event at the establishment (e.g. weekly bible study). Also, if the partner is interested, they could co-host a farmers market information session that discusses the house of worship and other food-related programming.
- d. *Faith-Based Member Engagement & Volunteerism*** – Related to the potential for programming, we found it helpful when member engagement and volunteerism was encouraged by the faith-based organization. Congregants enlisted to volunteer at the market or help administer any programming, such as cooking demonstrations, which greatly supported our efforts and helped grow trust and awareness from the community. Also, consider advertising the market in the congregation’s list-serves, newsletters or social media if applicable.

10. Future Work:

- i. *Continued Work of FMPP Project:*** The two Faith in Food guides developed will continue to be of benefit to congregations, farmers, and communities. As faith communities seek ways to connect resources to people experiencing food insecurity in their neighborhoods, the Faith in Food guide will provide tangible next steps.

Furthermore, these guides highlight underutilized economic opportunities for congregations and farmers. Congregations can build upon the assets that exist within their faith community or physical house of worship as a means of financial support, leading to the potential for new job creation. For example, as discussed in the July 2016 workshop, houses of worship can rent out their kitchens to food entrepreneurs as a revenue source.

The July workshop for congregations sparked quite a bit of enthusiasm. Many attendees expressed a desire to participate in continued discussions around faith communities and food access. The groundwork completed during the FMPP funding period has potential to parlay into a larger, informal network of houses of worship and food advocates. Such connections, coupled with the key information from the Faith in Food guides, could lead to additional farmers markets, community gardens and local food businesses.

- ii. *Recommendations for Future Activities:*** Building off of the strong response to the workshop held for faith leaders and food access organizations, there is a need and a desire to keep these conversations around faith and food going and to support new projects. For future activities, an ongoing workgroup for faith leaders, congregants, farmers, and service providers would help advance project goals on a wider scale.