

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; 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>	September 30, 2015- September 29,2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Julie Tracy
Authorized Representative Phone:	847-530-1444
Authorized Representative Email:	julie@jmtf.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Julie + Michael Tracy Family Foundation
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Growing Solutions Farm - Fresh Food Network for Communities
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15LFPPIL0154
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Chicago, IL
Total Awarded Budget:	\$25,0000

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: _____

Page Break

- 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 April 2016, [JMTE](#) will increase the number of urban growers who contribute fresh produce to local food pantries from eight regional areas in Cook County Illinois to 12 neighborhood areas.

a. **Progress Made:** [Grace Seeds Ministry](#) worked with growers and agencies that operated a community food pantry and who were located in low-income census tracts and known food deserts. To identify these areas, the JMTE staff used the Economic Research Services' (ERS) Food Access Research Atlas and expanded its reach into nearby neighborhoods where existing relationships were established. Over the funding period, Grace Seed Ministries established new relationships with a total of 13 growing partners. Added to the existing 10 growers, we were able to distribute approximately 20,000 pounds of fresh produce to pantries and emergency food providers. Table 1 summarizes the relationships with our new growers:

Table 1: Grace Seed Ministries: Growing Partners			
Partner	1/16-9/16	9/15-12/15	TotalPounds
Growing Solutions Farm*			4,449
Museum of Science & Industry*	550	200	750
CCRC*	2,000	1,200	3,200
Oasis/Richards HS (combined w/above)			w/above
BethlehemEvLutheran*	800	200	1,000
First UMC, Oak Lawn	1,000	400	1,400
Palos Heights CRC	200		200
Trinity College (w/ PHCRC)			w/above
Faith United PC	500	200	700
Burbank Manor PC	320	50	370
Oak Lawn PC	100	50	150
LouisViveritoSr. Center	100	30	130
Muslim American Society	200	30	230
Byrd School	640	75	715
Tobin (combined w/ Byrd)			w/above
Grace Community CRC	150	20	170
Salem UCC	160	20	180
Pilgrim Faith UCC	160		160

Mt. Zion Lutheran Church	300	100	400
Oak LawnRelLeaders/Workers	meals/no garden		
Riverside PC	160	20	180
St. Mary	500	100	600
Cantata	250	200	450
First Pres., LaGrange	300	100	400
PC of Western Springs	300	20	320
Morgan Park PC	350	40	390
PLAID Academy	20		20
Good Shepherd PC	640	50	690
Midway Garden Club	100		100
Clearing Library	100		100
St. Jane's Parish	400	50	450
MariaKaupasCenter	300	50	350
Montgomery Place	100	10	110
(all greens/hyrdoponictowers)			
St. Bride	200		200
St. Benedict the African East	100	30	130
Precious Blood Ministry*	1,000		1,000
MarillacHouse	30		30
		TotalPounds	19,724
Seedlings Grown/Distributed			
ElimChristian Services	600+ seedlings		600
Irene Haugen	200+ seedlings		200
Gotham Greens (new donor)	160+ seedlings		160
Lawndale Christian Health Center	90 seedlings		90
		TotalSeedling	1,050
New Partners/Education (nooutputs to reportthis year)			

St. Ignatius			
Universal School/Mosque Foundation			
No donation from Brickyard Community Garden.			

- ii. **Goal/Objective 2:** By April 2016, JMTF, University of Illinois-Extension, and Grace Seeds Ministry will provide additional business training and technical assistance for eight food growers so they can increase their harvest, continue to contribute fresh produce to local pantries, and earn revenue from their harvests. Future revenue from sales can be reinvested into the garden or to support wage earning jobs.

As a side note, none of the LFPP funding was used for production. Some of our sessions may have included mention of production but our focus was on distribution and therefore other funding sources were used as it may have related to production.

- a. **Progress:** JMTF, in partnership with the University of Illinois Extension, has sponsored education sessions, field trips and project workshops. These include:

November 2015: Tour of the [Growing Solutions Farm](#). Raised bed, season extension through hoop house, high and low tunnels, crop selection and supply organization methods were reviewed. Eight existing partners and five farm interns participated.

March 2016: Project staff met with each participant to determine interests and needs and tailor follow-up that's appropriate for whatever level of engagement they'll enter our network.

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) & Good Handling Practices (GHP) facilitated by Cook County University of Illinois-Extension, Mr. Zachary Grant, who is the Local Food Systems & Small Farms Educator. Mr. Grant conducted one workshop (March 12) focused on how to grow, harvest, and distribute fresh produce using safe practices. GAP training ensured that our participants knew how to handle produce responsibly minimizing any risk of food safety hazards.

In addition, the staff at the Growing Solutions Farm provided hands-on workshops and one-on-one consultations with growing partners. Our goal was to encourage growers to implement various crop techniques to increase growing capacity, and create a healthy growing environment. These techniques included specific composting and soil development processes that are designed for farming on small urban lots. Interactive activities were conducted during the early Spring months of 2016.

- b. **Impact on Community:** JMTF and Grace Seed Ministries developed an interactive food hub that supports growers as business owners who wish to increase their harvest and profits. The availability of technical and business training

supported a city-wide effort in the development of entrepreneurial strategies for urban economic growth in a new industry that has thrived in Chicago over the past decade. Additionally, this project was designed to build community partnerships to ensure both the production and distribution of healthy, fresh food targeting populations that need better and more affordable access to these healthy foods. This will not only make an impact on the economic condition of our city's neighborhoods, but will improve health and unite members of communities where growers operate. Our objective in this project was to assess the interest of local growers to expand their outputs, and compile best practices that will support the growth of a local food hub.

iii. **Goal/Objective 3:** By October 1, 2015, a hoop house at the Growing Solutions Farm will operate as a pilot project and serve as a training area for extended season activities.

a. **Progress:** The hoop house at Growing Solutions Farm is operational as a permanent facility that effectively supports the extension of the growing season. Project Interns benefited from an opportunity to participate in the installation of the structure and construct raised garden beds, hoop house flooring, hoop house materials, and crop selection for fall season. Our business partner, XL Catlin, hosted a community building day to help build the structure and to further increase our sustainability. XL Catlin employees, working in the agricultural insurance space, worked side by side with farm Interns to establish flooring, move compost and create rows in the high tunnel area of the hoop house. Additionally, during the 2016 growing season, JMTF built seven 40' x 26' raised garden beds in the hoop house, which resulted in a harvest of approximately 1,715 pounds of produce from the hoop house alone. Through the installation of the hoop house (which LFPP Funds were not used), JMTF was able to produce additional produce, resulting in increased distribution to our partners.

b. **Impact on Community:** The Growing Solutions Farm, located in the Illinois Medical District, serves as a community farm and vocational training site where individuals with developmental disabilities gain work experience that provides them with agriculture skills. To date, eight of our Interns have been placed in wage-earning positions with local businesses. Growing Solutions Farm serves as a replicable teaching model where local and state organizations have visited to learn more about our model.

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:** As a food production and distribution project, the goals of the Growing Solutions' Farm Fresh Food Network for Communities did not focus on number of jobs created.
- ii. **Number of jobs retained:** With the addition of 13 new growers, 9 new jobs were created during the course of the funding period. In addition, 7 Interns, working with Grace Seeds Ministries, earned income during the funding period. A total of 8,420 hours of time was invested into the program by our 30 Interns.
- iii. **Number of indirect jobs created:** Grace Seeds Ministries created four independent contractor positions.

- iv. **Number of markets expanded:** There are a total of 13 new growers and 5 new food pantries who work together to expand our outreach and total outputs from the gardens/farms.
- v. **Number of new markets established:** Seven new communities have been established.
- vi. **Market sales increased by \$N/A and increased by N/A%.** As a food pantry project, this is not applicable.
- vii. **Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:** With an addition of 13 new growing partners, we were able to increase our partners by 100%. In addition, we were able increase our harvest from 10,000 pounds to nearly 20,000 pounds.
 - a. **Percent Increase:** There was a 130% increase in partners, and 150% increase in food distributed to local pantries.

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?**

N/A

4. **Discuss your community partnerships.**

i. **Who are your community partners?**

As reported in our Interim Report, the project benefited from the contributions of various community agencies and businesses. Our primary partner was Grace Seeds Ministries who played a critical role in distributing more than 20,000 pounds of donated produce to local food pantries. Grace Seeds will continue be a critical partner in local food donations.

Additional project partners included:

- Illinois Medical District Commission: Growing Solutions Farm is located on a 1.2 acre lot that has been leased to JMTF under a long-term agreement.
- University of Illinois-Chicago Extension: Supported JMTF with access to technical assistance, education, donations of materials, funding, and agricultural expertise.
- Rush University Medical Center: Supported the project through access to information and medical expertise for interns with psychiatric comorbidities as well as research consultants.
- Easter Seals Therapeutic School for Autism Research: Recruited program participants in educational programming.
- Al Raby High School (Chicago Public School), and their Special Education Transition Team: Identified students who would benefit from participation. Al Raby staff also supported JMTF in the development of curriculum.
- Chicago Public Schools Office of Diverse Learners: Assisted with scheduling in the summer and coordinated transportation and permissions for students to participate off site.
- LYFE Kitchen (local sustainable food restaurant): Purchased a large quantity of produce and donated food for a lunch for nearly 150 people. LYFE Kitchen also offered job training by establishing a weekly café at the farm, giving our Interns an opportunity to manage the operations.
- Brookfield Zoo: Purchased produce to feed animals and supported program opportunities for the Interns (trips to the zoo and pizza parties).
- XL Catlin - Agricultural Insurance Department: Adopted the farm as a corporate philanthropic project to give back to the community where they operate. The corporate relationship included a contribution of funds to purchase a hoop house as well as time and talent in supporting the construction and installation of the structure.

- Lend Lease Foundation: Supported the farm with contributions of labor and donated supplies and materials.
- Autism Speaks: Awarded \$25,000 in funding to support vocational programs for adults with autism on site during the 2015 -2016 time frame.

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

Our partners have essential roles that provide support in four basic categories:

- Education partners who provide technical assistance and basic agriculture education.
- Business partners who purchase fresh produce and/or hire Interns who have worked on the farms of our growing partners.
- Growers who work with JMTF and Grace Seeds Ministries to grow fresh produce in urban areas that need access to healthy and affordable foods.
- Pantries who distribute fresh produce to low-income residents who live in food deserts.

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

Grace Seeds Ministries will continue to support the development of the growers' network. Growers will be able to participate in technical assistance and workshop opportunities to increase our fresh food outputs. The work we do will benefit the growth of urban agriculture in Chicago and enhance opportunities for workforce expansion. We are grateful to continue relationships with all of our community partners and as a result continue to grow and expand our services and operations.

5. **Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?** Not Applicable

6. **Have you publicized any results yet?*** No.

- i. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?** N/A
- ii. **To whom did you publicize the results?** N/A
- iii. **How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?** N/A

***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?** JMTF and Grace Seeds Ministries distributed project surveys to our growers and food pantries to find out what technical and educational needs they had prior to the start of our training.
- ii. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?** The results of surveys sent to our growing partners after the completion of these workshops, indicated that growers were more confident about their ability to maximize their harvests and meet the demand for fresh food. This survey included inquiries about what kind of educational offerings they

would like to see at future education sessions. The survey indicated that our growing partners' education interests include:

- How-to workshops on gardening and horticulture.
- Creation care with focus on developing healthy, sustainable ecosystems.
- Reducing hunger and poverty.
- Spirituality, art and prayer.

The interests of pantry partners:

- Opportunity to distribute recipes to incorporate fresh produce into meals.
- Healthy eating and wellness.
- Distribution of written literature on freezing fruit/vegetables.

8. Budget Summary:

- 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:**
- 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?**

9. Lessons Learned:

- 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).**

The unique design of the urban farming model and our focus on young adults with autism and other developmental disabilities has gained some national attention. In early 2016, JMTF's Growing Solutions Farm staff was asked to provide technical assistance to TERI Inc. (Training, Education, Research, & Innovation), a California-based education agency who wanted to learn how to replicate our farming and food distribution model. Much like JMTF, TERI also works with individuals who have autism. During a week-long consulting visit, followed by a site visit to the Growing Solutions Farm, and ongoing communications throughout the year, the TERI project staff shared and adopted much of our farming model and best practices in agricultural interfaces for adults with developmental disabilities.
- If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.**

Ensuring that you have strong partners is critical to success particularly when working in the perishable food space. Without the commitment of a dedicated team, who is able to problem solve and quickly adopt to changes (such as distributing 200 lbs of scallions in a day) you could be left countering your mission of distribution.
- Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:**

Funding from the USDA Local Food Promotion Program was our first federal grant. With this award, the administrative staff worked to develop a more accessible data and financial distribution process. This process was developed because both our partner, Grace Seeds Ministries, and our Growing Solutions Farm staff needed to track our

outcomes and expenditures related to this project. Spreadsheets for the data were developed using software offered by Google Docs which is an affordable resource for a small nonprofit organization similar to ours. JMTF staff oversees all financial entries and reports those expenditures to our finance accountant who creates and reviews financial statements.

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.**

JMTF and our partners are committed to expanding our distribution and technical assistance to new growers. We will continue to work with our growing partners to increase production to benefit vulnerable communities. We will accomplish this through targeted outreach and through the use of our website and social media. The use of nonpaid media, through television segments and [news articles](#) will also help us to continue to grow and achieve local recognition.. We continue to educate our Interns, staff, parents, teachers and partners who also serve as ambassadors for us.

- 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?**
[JMTF](#) is always happy to speak to other organizations (info@jmtf.org).