

## Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by LFPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due within 90 days of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to LFPP staff to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: [USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov); Fax: 202-720-0300

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact LFPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015
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Recipient Organization Name:	Heartland Communities, Inc.
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Plowshares Local Food System Project
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-IN-0061
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Fort Wayne, IN
Total Awarded Budget:	\$25,000

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: Outreach and primary research, creating a comprehensive inventory database and needs assessment of local growers and regional distributors, with analysis

- a. Progress Made:

Database of local farms has been compiled with contact information. Producer Survey instrument was created and distributed to 40 farms. Forty-nine farms have been engaged, twenty of them filled out the Producer's Survey for analysis of produce, challenges and barriers to growth. Analysis: some producers are happy with their volume and are not interested in wholesale markets. Several are interested in expanding but would need heavy equipment such as a tractor in order to produce more. The other barrier is on-farm food safety certifications that are now required by FSMA. An email distribution list of 42 farmers has been compiled, and communication goes out to them regularly with information and updates of project progress. The other farmers on the list are Amish and do not use electronic communication, but are updated by phone.

- b. Impact on Community:

The farmers who are engaged are excited, several of them have agreed to join a food hub start-up. We will do organizing and production planning this winter. Fifty farmers representing 35 farms attended a training called Wholesale Success in February 2015. Most of them also attended a Local Food Summit event in March 2015, hosted by community partner Purdue Extension Service, to learn about local food systems, and discuss the possibilities of a Local Food Policy Council, and Plowshares Local Food Hub distribution project. A computer CD containing many pdf files of documents with information on local food systems, value-chain components, business models, food policy handbooks and other relevant information was compiled and 100 copies created and distributed at the Local Food Summit and in subsequent meetings with community stakeholders.

- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Primary and secondary research on regional fresh foods market potential, and analysis to determine demand for product mix

- a. Progress Made:

Secondary research in market potential was conducted through information provided by community stakeholder Indiana Small Business Development Center for six counties in the region. Market potential was determined for 6 county region by looking at ESRI reports for fresh fruits and vegetables purchased for at-home preparation. In 2013, Allen and 5 nearby counties spent \$278,274,966 on fruits and vegetables purchased for at-home preparation. If those 211,967 households spent \$10 per week on fruits and vegetables grown in the region, it would create \$110,222,840 per year in new income. Add another \$10 on locally processed prepared local food and \$10 on local food served in local restaurants it will raise \$330, 668,520 in new revenue to re-circulate.

Survey instrument for local market analysis of restaurants and institutional buyers has been created. Survey of local restaurants and other food establishments is ongoing.

Impact on Community:

Several four-season growers have produce ready-to-sell and as buyers are identified they are referred to the producers. The local food-co-op is selling four varieties of lettuce and two varieties of kale as well as collards from one of the growers. A lunch counter at the Community College has pledged to purchase

lettuce, onions and tomatoes as they are available. Another “anchor institution” is the local nonprofit Parkview Hospital, which has performed recent Community Health Assessment for several area counties and determined the largest health risks are obesity, diabetes and other diet-related health conditions. Parkview, in partnership with Parkview Foundation and other health foundations, has embarked on a series of initiatives intended to address these health issues in the community with the H.E.A.L. (Healthy Eating and Active Living) program. One primary goal is to create better access to fresh, local fruits and vegetables in food deserts, and to teach healthy eating and cooking. Parkview Hospital is interested in facilitating the initiation and growth of a Local Food Distribution Hub by being an early buyer for the hospital food service. With the lead of Parkview and several local restaurants which are already buying local produce when available, a food hub start-up will begin with a stable buying base.

A third set of institutional market is in cafeterias and food service for public school systems. Barriers to farm-to-school programs, and purchases by community school systems has been explored and a committee is being formed to address legislative and policy barriers at the State level.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Convening discussions among local growers to begin the process of planning for growth and coordinated product mix

a. Progress Made:

Initial conversations concerning planning for growth and coordinated product mix were begun at the Wholesale Success training event and the Local Food Summit event. In online communications with farmers through the email distribution list, links to webinar video on production planning have been distributed to engaged farmers. The video was produced by Local Food Marketplace, the food hub software and web portal used by hundreds of food hubs across the US. A live demo of the software/platform was conducted April 30, 2012 at the local Purdue Extension Office for farmers engaged in this project.

Subsequent outreach and discussions with individual farmers have occurred concerning new Federal Regulations, Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) particularly. Expansion plans must address the FSMA regulations set to go into effect in September 2015. With the Food Safety Modernization Act going into effect, many farmers are interested in technical assistance in getting GAPs Certification that satisfies FSMA. Purdue Extension Service conducts training in Good Agricultural Practices, starting with a full-day training in May 2015, which was attended by the Project Manager and two Urban Farmers. Three traditional farmers expressed interest but could not leave the farm during planting time. Project Manager arranged to work with farmers on individual farm safety plans. Extension educator has agreed to bring the FSMA-adjusted training to Northeast Indiana in February 2016 to help farmers prepare for FSMA. Additional information became available of Pilot Projects in Group-GAPs programs in Michigan and others. Area farmers are interested in pursuing this option as part of expansion plans.

Food Hub software will be purchased and will sell produce in a soft-launch of produce aggregation and distribution, beginning with several four-season growers in the area. Community stakeholders have an ideal location for a Food Hub to operate from, and negotiations are still in-process to secure the use of the facility. Production planning will be conducted during winter for coordinated product availability in 2016.

b. Impact on Community:

Two farmers have advanced expansion plans in place and are already GAP certified. Five more farmers are working actively on expansion plans and certifications. The goal “Convening discussions among local growers to begin the process of planning for growth and coordinated product mix” is certainly underway

and the outcome of changed attitudes is evident. The impact is primarily in the thought processes of farmers to begin having an idea of the possibilities of cooperating with each other to create systems that will serve a large local market, instead of seeing themselves in competition with each other for the meager markets that exist in Farmer's Markets and the few restaurants and retails that are on the cutting-edge of local foods movement and ready to buy now. This paradigm shift is happening, and is crucial to the success of this Plowshares Project effort to develop new markets for locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

- iv. Goal/Objective 4: Determine initial phase and subsequent phases for development of a comprehensive local food system

- a. Progress Made:

- Local Food System: Phases of Implementation

- I. Phase 1. GET EXISTING LOCAL PRODUCE TO EXISTING READY BUYERS
  - 1. Organize farmers who are ready to sell to the wholesale market;
  - 2. Find wholesale buyers who are ready to buy locally sourced food
    - i. Parkview Hospital has agreed to act as an anchor institution in purchase of local produce as GAPs certified farms have product available.
    - ii. Food Co-op is already buying from local Amish 4-season organic grower, as well as other local producers in-season.
  - 3. Incorporate Plowshares Cooperative Food Hub as a for-profit, multi-stakeholder cooperative local food distribution warehouse business entity.
    - i. Plowshares founding member has been accepted for January 2016 University of Vermont Food Hub Management Certification training program. Selected from hundreds of applicants, James Jones is one of only 25 students for 2016 in this first-of-its-kind training. Selection was based on the quality of community partnerships.
  - 4. Create online purchasing platform and recruit users
    - i. A local-food patron has offered to purchase the software and we are only waiting for a website to be developed. The supporter has pledged to pay the initial licensing fees to create an online ordering system through Local Food Marketplace. A minimum of nine farmers will agree to pay \$100 each to cover the first year of monthly fees. Funding sources still need to be identified for creation of a website from which the ordering platform will be given access.
  - 5. Broker relationships between buyers and sellers
    - i. Initial phase will offer online purchasing and payment, but not many services, so no location is necessary and margins are very low.
- II. Phase 2. DEVELOP MORE PRODUCERS & REACH NEW MARKETS
  - 1. Create workforce development programs for increase in farmers and farm workers
    - i. Workforce Investment Act funding through Workforce One training programs.
    - ii. My Brother's Keeper program for African-American men, youth and adults is being pursued with collaboration with City of Fort Wayne Community Development Department.
  - 2. Create agriculture certification programs for fruit and vegetable production, organics

- i. Ivy Tech Community College Agriculture Program has agreed to develop these programs and they are preparing to build their first greenhouses for training.
  - ii. Some Specialty Crop courses should be available by fall semester 2016
3. Provide technical assistance and training opportunities for existing farmers to meet FSMA requirements to sell through intermediaries.
  - i. FSMA-adjusted GAPs course to be delivered in February 2016, at a large-capacity educational facility by Purdue Extension Educators. Ivy Tech and Indiana-Purdue University have both offered space. This will be repeated annually as needed.
  - ii. Group GAPs cohorts will be formed at the training for mutual support in third-party certifications.
  - iii. Project leader Heartland Communities, Inc. has formed partnerships with the Indiana State Department of Health and Indiana Farm Bureau to help Northeast Indiana farmers prepare to meet FSMA requirements, traceability infrastructure, and outbreak protocol for implementation in Plowshares cooperative Food Hub.
4. Develop new markets:
  - i. Execute a “Buy Fresh – Buy Local” campaign with local restaurant chefs as opinion leaders featuring local sourced ingredients
  - ii. As cultural icons, chefs are influential figures who help set the course for broader trends in food culture
  - iii. Execute a series of initiatives around cooperation among restaurants and other local retailers that promote local farm produce, such as:
    - Create a BALLE Chapter~ (pronounced bolly) Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, to connect, build their capacity, and innovate. BALLE works to identify and connect pioneering leaders, spread solutions, and attract investment toward local economies.
    - Publish Edible Fort Wayne magazine
    - Co-op on joint marketing, branding and advertising
    - Execute a “Buy Local” consumer education campaign
    - Create a local loyalty card program with rewards earned for purchases
    - Cluster-wide joint purchasing options for bulk discounts on supplies and equipment in addition to local food products
  - iv. These marketing and efficiency tools all have successful platforms being delivered to local business alliances for a franchising fee.
5. Locate Plowshares Cooperative Food Hub in turnkey Community Harvest Food Bank-owned facility, associated with farm and business incubator.
  - i. Community Harvest Food Bank has just completed a \$5million Blanch-&-Freeze facility with shared-use kitchen (remodeled restaurant chain commissary), with huge volume capacity for refrigeration and freezer, cold loading docks and prep rooms that is under negotiation to operate a Food Hub and business incubator base for Plowshares Project. The facility has already passed all HACCP and other food safety certifications and is ready to occupy.
  - ii. An alternative Phase 1 location for aggregation of produce in a start-up Food Hub has been offered in a temporary space at Ivy Tech Community College.

6. Incubate new farm businesses by assisting newly certified farm workers from Ivy Tech Ag programs. Build 4-season indoor growing operations in association with Ivy Tech Community College Building Construction Program.
7. Incubate value-added processing businesses and capacities of farmers, in association with Ivy Tech Community College Culinary Arts Program.

b. Impact on Community:

The whole community is beginning to move together to make this vision into reality in a collaboration among many community stakeholders that have come to the table. We are committed to this plan of action to begin creating a local food distribution system. The range of stakeholders is broad and the capacity is deep, including: farmers, retail and restaurant buyers, nonprofits, food banks, economic development professionals, consumers, funders, anchor institutions, technical and university colleges and extension services.

- v. Goal/Objective 5: Create business plans for initial-phase profit centers within the value chain, including business model, assumptions, and financial model

a. Progress Made:

Business model:

Plowshares Cooperative Food Hub will be a for-profit distribution company that offers local sourced farm produce for wholesale market, including restaurant, retail and institutional buyers. Ownership structure will be farmer and worker-owned cooperative. Value proposition for farmers includes access to markets, joint marketing, and technical assistance for certifications. Value proposition to buyers will include convenient access to high quality local source food, food safety and traceability, transparency and relationships with farmers.

Phase 1. Initial phase will offer online purchasing and payment, but not many services, so no location is necessary and margins are very low (~5%). Transport is arranged by the farmer and customer, with the few 4-season farmers making deliveries.

CONTINGENCY Phase 1.5. On the contingency that the expected location in the former restaurant chain commissary (Phase 2. Below) does not materialize fast enough, a temporary aggregation site has been arranged in the Ivy Tech Community College for summer harvest produce in 2016. There is a possibility also that this summer produce could be used in a CSA style retail market created through a consumer education and marketing program via community partners Associated Churches and Labor Council affiliated Workers' Project. The campaign includes presentations and ongoing education to community groups, church groups, union halls, and schools, which would then serve as distribution drop-off points.

Phase 2. In the location of the former restaurant commissary, weekly or twice weekly online orders will be harvested by the farmers, and aggregated for pick-up or delivery. More services will be offered at the Hub (Aggregation, Trucking, Pickup Services, Kitchen, Brokerage, Storage, GAP certification) which will earn higher margins (~15%) and diversify revenue streams.

Assumptions :

- National and local trends in demand for locally grown food have been recognized by leading food industry companies and the market potential for local produce is so high that the largest companies are scrambling to offer premium prices. Indiana lags in recognition and taking advantage of

economic development opportunities, but with education more Hoosier farmers will begin the switch to fruit and vegetables.

- New opportunities in the local food cluster will attract entrepreneurs, new farmers and food workers when training in appropriate skills and certifications, and business development support is accessible.
- Restaurant, retail and institutional buyers, with education and marketing, will respond by purchasing and promoting local sourced foods.
- (a.) Short, local transportation distances, and (b.) removing the profit layer demanded of shareholder corporations or businesses owned by capital, (in which labor is an input to be held at minimum,) will leave revenue for necessary farmer margins, better wages/benefits and surplus to put back in business growth.

Financial model:

It is too early in the planning process to form a complete Financial Model that is grounded in actual supply and markets. The market potential for each phase above will be detailed in the coming months for a complete picture from which to make projections.

b. Impact on Community: not applicable

vi. Goal/Objective 6: Identify workforce potential and workforce development requirements.

a. Progress Made:

If we are to feed ourselves in Northeast Indiana we will need a new generation of farm workers and food workers. Plowshares Project is working with community educational institution Ivy Tech community College to create fruit and vegetable certification programs. The organization serving as project leader, Heartland Communities, Inc. is prepared to offer entrepreneurs coaching and business development services, cooperative business organization and training in business financial management. Other workforce development initiatives are in the conceptual stage, including green jobs career pathways for populations usually left out of economic opportunity. President Obama's program intended to create opportunities for African American men, My Brother's Keeper, is being explored as a resource for pathways out of poverty. Fort Wayne/ NE Indiana has very large immigrant populations that are seeking a role in the local economy. Statewide collaborations are under discussion with Indiana State Department of Agriculture Director of Local Food Programs, David King.

b. Impact on Community:

Of course this is too early to tell, but the potential for impact over time is immense.

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: not applicable
  - ii. Number of jobs retained: not applicable
  - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: not applicable
  - iv. Number of markets expanded: not applicable
  - v. Number of new markets established: not applicable
  - vi. Market sales increased by \$ not applicable and increased by not applicable %.
  - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:

a. Percent Increase: not applicable

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? not applicable

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

i. Who are your community partners?

Grant project contributing partners:

The Workers' Project

Fort Wayne Urban League

Associated Churches and Associated Churches Food Banks

Additional community partners, past and future contributions:

Purdue Extension Service – Allen County - - - convene meetings with farmers / stakeholders, host large trainings, annual Local Food Summit, GAPs Certification class in 2016

Purdue Extension Service – Statewide Local Foods Program - - - organize Local Food Summit, speakers

Ivy Tech Community College - - - create Fruit & Veg Ag programs, construction of greenhouses,

temporary Phase 1. Aggregation site for Food Hub, administrative resources (grantwriter, referrals)

Parkview Hospital (nonprofit) and Parkview Foundation - - - anchor institution willing to buy through the Food Hub, collaborator in educational efforts

Community Harvest Food Bank - - - Location for food hub is under negotiation in multi-million dollar turnkey remodeled former restaurant chain commissary with shared use kitchen and light processing

Northeast Indiana Area Partnership (Economic Development nonprofit) - - - Business development

services; currently executing a USDA grant project to write a strategic plan for local food system in NE Indiana, with coordination among all actors toward the development of the food business cluster

Indiana State Department of Agriculture – Local Food Programs - - - Branding and Marketing

campaign, Indiana Grown; Statewide workforce development initiative being discussed

Indiana State Department of Health - - - FSMA readiness, outbreak traceability preparedness collaboration

Indiana Farm Bureau - - - FSMA readiness, outbreak traceability preparedness collaboration

Three Rivers Food Co-op Natural Grocery - - - early adopter of local foods commitment, buyer

Brightpoint (NGO CDFI micro-lender) - - - business development, small loans to startups and expanding businesses

FamilyFarmed.org of Illinois - - - 2015 Wholesale Success training

US Green Building Council Fort Wayne Chapter - - - pledge to provide pro bono LEED design services

5. ii. How have they contributed to the results you've already

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

Grant project partners have contributed as intended with printing, meeting space, attendance at events such as the Local Food Summit, Union (Worker) Co-op Symposium and Northeast Indiana Food Cluster Strategic Plan Kickoff Breakfast. Additional community partners have contributed with commitments to collaborate through the remaining planning phases and into the implementation phases of this project. Examples are cited throughout this report, and listed above for convenience.

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

Partners have made commitments to collaborate through the remaining planning phases and into the implementation phases of this project. Examples are cited throughout this report, and listed above for convenience.

6. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? not applicable
7. Have you publicized any results yet?\* Yes, the result of outreach, research and planning.
  - i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
  - ii. To whom did you publicize the results?
  - iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

\*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).

A general project informational brochure was created (400 printed) and distributed to farmers, potential community partners, media journalists, and grant project reporting meetings. A marketing brochure intended to engage restaurant chefs, owners and buyers has been created (100 printed) and distributed to food truck owners, and intended audiences. Articles reporting on the project appeared in two print media, a local daily newspaper and a business weekly newspaper. One interview was conducted and published on a local radio talk show about the project and how the project is being featured in a panel discussion at the first annual Local Food Summit.

8. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work? No.
  - i. If so, how did you collect the information?
9. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

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: X
  - ii. Did the project generate any income? No
10. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

Lessons Learned:

- i. Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).

The most difficult part was engaging farmers. Of course they are very busy during the growing season, but I also discovered that they do not check their email. Since the farms are by nature generally rural, many farmers still have dial-up internet access and do not use the internet much. Outreach to farmers was most successful at the Farm Show event and by going to Farmers' Markets. Collecting contact information included some short-sighted errors, such as collecting email addresses and not phone numbers or mailing addresses in some cases. Communications with farmers in general was lacking, and in the future will rely heavily on hard-copy newsletters in the US Mail. This will increase costs for printing and postage, but will have a better result. Individual communication should be by telephone for short-term announcements and conversations between newsletters. On-farm visits are recommended for in-depth needs assessments, primary research concerning the farm's capacity and the farmer's interest and ability to increase production.

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

For a year-long planning project by a single part-time staff person, the outcome was resoundingly successful. The only part of the goal that was not achieved is the detailed Financial Model for a start-up food hub, since it is too early in the process to have meaningful data on which to create the model. So that was a bit too ambitious.

- 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:

Have a cushion or plan for cash-flow because it is hard to plan around cash disbursements.

#### 11. 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.

This planning year was the perfect initiation of a community-wide effort to develop a local food economy. The value was in engaging farmers and many other community stakeholders and gatekeepers to resources and organizations. I was able to meet with people all over the region and state that are enthusiastically committed to making local food access a priority. The one community partner that was not discussed in detail in this report is Northeast Indiana Area Partnership, the Economic Development nonprofit. As briefly described in the list of community partnerships, they have hired consultants with the award of a USDA grant to write a region-wide Strategic Plan for the Regional Food Network. Industrial cluster around agriculture and food processing was identified in the last several years as having potential for successful economic development. Current and planned regional food network projects include regional food hubs, incubators, farm-to-fork initiatives, farmers markets, food festivals, cooking education, urban agricultural production, community kitchens and neighborhood spaces. The Plowshares Local Food System Project and Food Hub Cooperative are central to the region's promising initiatives, and will be featured in the Strategic Plan. This Plan is the opportunity to coordinate Plowshares with all the related food, health and agricultural efforts in the region.

- 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?

The recommendation is to implement the plan outlined in part 1.:iv.:a. of this report. A strategy for funding will need to be developed to support staff people that are required to be dedicated to this task, as well as other program and start-up costs. There has already been substantial community investment in infrastructure that should be used for the many purposes of quality food access and quality career access that this project offers to a local food economy. The overall project is a huge, many-year, community-wide, region-wide paradigm-shift that will affect everyone. It will take commitment and engagement from everyone and will result in improved quality of life for everyone. This planning year was the beginning. Thank you for your support and granting the opportunity to serve in this capacity.