

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; 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>	December 1, 2014 – August 31, 2015
Authorized Representative Name:	Allison Rogers, Jordan Smith
Authorized Representative Phone:	617-635-3717
Authorized Representative Email:	food@boston.gov
Recipient Organization Name:	City of Boston – Office of Food Initiatives
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	City of Boston Urban Agriculture Visioning Group
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-MA-0079
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Boston, MA
Total Awarded Budget:	25,000 (grant) + \$6,649 (matching funds)

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: Hire a third-party Urban Agriculture Visioning Group facilitator to schedule the meetings, take notes, and follow up with members
 - a. Progress Made: *The City of Boston Office of Food Initiatives completed a public RFP process for the Urban Ag Visioning facilitator role in December, with the engagement of [Northbound Ventures](#), a local sustainable communities and food systems consulting firm.*
 - b. Impact on Community: *Securing the USDA LFPP grant and launching the visioning process with a reputable local consultant reassured the community at a critical juncture (administration change and reorganization) that urban ag remains an important part of the city’s social, environmental, and economic development agenda.*
 - ii. Goal/Objective 2: Establish the visioning group’s mission and focus points for urban agriculture in a unified vision for urban agriculture in Boston
 - a. Progress Made: *The group’s mission and focus established in the grant proposal and activated at the launch of the process have been consistently communicated in all outreach and engagement activities to date. Great care was taken to gather and translate all available resources and feedback for eventual inclusion in a clear, concise, comprehensive vision.*
 - b. Impact on Community: *The community experienced a highly transparent, democratic process that not only allowed, but advocated for intense public participation and an open agenda to identify challenges, concerns, and historical barriers that to be addressed in the final vision.*
 - iii. Goal/Objective 3: Choose three main projects to focus on that fit within the scope of the mission
 - a. Progress Made: *The final vision outlines four (4) main goals with strategies, metrics, and milestones for each. See Appendix A for details of the vision goals.*
 - b. Impact on Community: *The goals address environmental, economic, social, and health impacts.*

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: 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 \$insert dollars and increased by insert percentage%. N/A
 - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: N/A
 - 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?

Answer: The process gathered feedback from all 18 neighborhoods of Boston and stakeholders of all types (hobby gardeners, commercial farmers, funders, community organizers, processors, distributors, buyers, etc.), ages (18+), and ethnicities (eg. white, black, Hispanic, East Asian, Middle Eastern, Native American, Indian-Asian, and others). A total of 186 responses to the first stakeholder survey were received and of those, 41% had not previously been engaged in the visioning process. See response to 6iii for more statistics and attached full vision report.

1. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners?

The primary community partners represented on the Urban Ag Visioning Steering Committee are:

- Best Bees, Noah Wilson-Rich*
- Boston Food Forest Coalition, Orion Kriegman*
- Boston Redevelopment Authority, Marie Mercurio*
- Codman Square Neighborhood Development, Jason Boyd*
- Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Bayoan Rossello-Cornier*
- Freight Farms, Brad McNamara*
- Green City Growers, Jessie Banhazi*
- NUBIA Seed & Yield Program, Sayed Mohamed-Nour*
- CCK Pearl, Jenn Faigel*
- ReVision Urban Farm, Shani Fletcher*
- The Department of Neighborhood Development, William Epperson*
- The Food Project, Sutton Kiplinger*
- The Mayor's Office of Food Initiatives, Jordan Smith*
- The Trustees of Reservations, Cathy Wirth*
- Trust for Public Land, Kevin Essington*
- Tufts New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, Jennifer Hashley*
- The Boston Foundation, Allison Bauer and Pamela Hung*
- The Kendall Foundation, Andy Kendall*
- Urban Farming Institute, Patricia Spence*

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

Answer: Members of the Steering Committee advised and guided the agenda of each monthly public stakeholder engagement meeting. They attended these meetings and provided additional support before and after meetings by way of identifying resources, best practices, and data valuable to the process. They were integral to soliciting stakeholder engagement through their large networks and offering learning and insights from experience to each conversation.

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

Answer: These organizations will continue to play a critical role in realizing the goals of the urban ag vision. They have the capacity to advocate, educate, and enable diverse development projects by sharing their networks and organizational resources with fellow community partners. Through continued implementation of their own programs, increased collaboration with other organizations, and the ability to align future strategic

planning with the shared vision, these groups will contribute to this project's future success.

2. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?

Answer: We engaged Holly Fowler of Northbound Ventures (www.northboundventures.com) to facilitate the urban ag visioning process. She organized eight (8) steering committee and public meetings held monthly across the city. Each event presented information about the process, provided education about current urban ag projects and best practices, and solicited input from the public regarding current challenges and future expectations. With the input of the Steering Committee, Holly also designed and managed distribution of four (4) surveys. She held one-on-one meetings with stakeholders and Steering Committee members to further assemble a comprehensive perspective on current urban ag initiatives and opportunities for this visioning process to drive forward specific progress. She helped raise awareness of the visioning process through attendance at local, state, and national level events with an urban ag focus. Finally, she built and maintained the website dedicated to this visioning process, which was a primary tool for soliciting engagement and sharing progress with the public.

3. Have you publicized any results yet?*

Answer: Ongoing updates of the visioning process have been shared with stakeholders. The final draft of the vision was made public in August, but a more formal, robust launch with a press release, etc. is still to follow.

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? *Via the August public meeting, Urban Ag listserv, social media, and on the Urban Ag Visioning Process blog <https://bostonurbanag.wordpress.com/updates/>*
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results? *Public*
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?
Via public meeting: 210 unique participants
Via the urban ag blog: 3,087 views / 960 visitors (117 visitors since final vision release)
Via social media: 5000+ conservatively

**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).*

Please see attached final report and copy of the Urban Ag Visioning blog Updates page.

4. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work? Yes

- i. If so, how did you collect the information?
Answer: Feedback was collected via public meetings, a survey of steering committee members, the urban ag visioning process blog, and one-on-one conversations between the consultant facilitator and subject matter experts/stakeholders.
- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?
Answer: Participants at the August public meeting, where the final vision was presented for the first time, were very satisfied with the outcome. Some shared that they had been highly skeptical of the process and yet found the final product to be an achievable but progressive vision that responded to broad stakeholder interests and overarching

municipal objectives.

"It's yet to be seen if these goals will turn in to real change, but I think it's a great start to get them down on paper and have a unified front throughout the urban agriculture community to commit to accomplishing what was decided on as priorities." – Steering Committee Member

5. 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? *No*
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

6. 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).
Answer: Recommend a more intense schedule of stakeholder engagement over a shorter period of time (3-6 months) that is conducive to farmer participation. Early spring and summer meetings were challenging for that stakeholder group. Scheduling each public meeting to be held in a different location in the city, easily accessible to public transportation, with parking, and adequate facilities was a challenge, but worth it. Venues were eager to be part of the process by hosting a meeting. Participants in the process discovered new resources in the community as a result of this decentralized approach (not holding meetings at City Hall) and it was possible to see different urban ag initiatives in action as a result. Even with meeting dates and time set months in advance, it was challenging to gain consistent participation from all steering committee members due to scheduling conflicts. Those planning similar processes in the future should budget for more one-on-one time with steering committee members, which was ultimately how input from many had to be gathered to inform the vision. A smaller steering committee (10-12 instead of 19-20 people) might also have worked.
- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.
Answer: The goals of the project were achieved.
- 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.
Answer: It would have been beneficial to hire a facilitator within the first month, to ensure the most amount of meetings possible within the one year timeframe. By hiring a facilitator in September, we could have held 4 additional meetings.

7. 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.

Answer: The urban ag vision will be the responsibility of the Office of Food Initiatives to implement over the course of the five year plan.

- 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?

Answer: Please see the following pages describing the strategies, metrics, and milestones of the urban ag vision.

APPENDIX A: BOSTON URBAN AGRICULTURE VISION GOALS

Goal 1: Increase land dedicated to food production

Strategies

- Continue identification of available municipal lots available for conversion to productive agricultural plots, prioritizing neighborhoods currently underserved by urban ag
- Incentivize private land owners to transition non-productive landscapes to productive agricultural spaces
- Continue review of regulation to increase total potential productive space for agricultural activities (e.g. expand composting, hens, hives)

Metrics

- % of land converted from non-productive space to urban ag use
- % of infrastructure development footprint dedicated to productive space
- Total productive area
- # of hives and # of hens
- Contributions to storm water management, carbon sequestration, and soil growth

Milestones

- Year 1: Conduct baseline assessment of land currently in food production, available for production, and potentially convertible to agricultural use; review strategic plan/criteria for disposition of land
- Year 2: >0% conversion
- Year 3: >5% conversion
- Year 4: >10% conversion from baseline
- Year 5: >20% conversion from baseline

Partners

- City of Boston (OFI, DND, BRA, and others)
- Land trusts / conservation orgs
- Neighborhood associations
- Land owners and developers
- Funders

Goal 2: Improve food production opportunities for all

Strategies

- Engage all city agencies touching urban agriculture in vision implementation planning
- Add social and environmental criteria to DND RFP*
- Establish additional applicant qualifications beyond current financial benchmarks
- Invest in citywide marketing of urban ag development opportunities to all citizens
- Provide technical assistance grants to existing growers and farmers in training

Metrics

- Value of grants awarded to support acquisition for both city-owned and privately owned land
- Average \$ spent per acre from pre-development to operational readiness
- # of unique RFP applicants and recipients
- % of RFPs awarded to minority individuals/organizations yearly
- Total population / % population engaged in growing food
- # / size of community ag plots located within walking distance (10 min. or 1/2 mile) of every resident

Milestones

- Year 1: Conduct baseline assessment of costs and engagement; establish multi-agency task force to consider ways to reduce permitting and site development costs
- Year 2: Citywide campaign promoting urban ag
- Year 3: Permitting and site development cost decreased >30%
- Year 5: Engagement increased >30% across demographic and geographic lines

Partners

- City of Boston (OFI, ISD, BPHC, BPWS, and others)
- Land trusts / Conservation orgs
- Farmer training programs
- Neighborhood organizations
- Funders

Goal 3: Increase food system resiliency and food security of all citizens

Strategies

- Address zoning, business licensing, and regulatory barriers through continued food policy reform to create additional market outlets for farmers and to bring access points for local food into proportion with neighborhood demand
- Increase public and private subsidies to ensure fair market prices for farmers and affordable local produce for low income local residents

Metrics

- Total \$/#/% of food grown and purchased locally
- % of demand / sales comprised of locally produced product
- Delta between price of locally grown vs. externally grown food
- # of food access programs offering locally grown foods
- Participation rate in food access and emergency food assistance programs
- Continuous improvement of self-sustaining farm operations based on operational income versus external funding

Milestones

- Year 1: Conduct baseline assessment of local food production and distribution
- Year 2: List of local food access points by neighborhood and incentive plan for additional outlets
- Year 3: >10% increase in local food production/purchasing from baseline opportunity
- Year 4: >20% increase in local food production/purchasing from baseline opportunity
- Year 5: Trend of decreasing demand for emergency food assistance

Partners

- City of Boston (OFI, DND, BRA, and others)
- Farmers
- Community health advocates
- Neighborhood associations
- Hunger agencies
- Funders

Goal 4: Promote community health and engagement

Strategies

- Establish communication strategy and materials to educate citizens about local urban ag
- Develop a research agenda to inform continuous improvements and communicate progress on urban ag engagement
- Incentivize community partners to promote the urban ag agenda to the general public

Metrics

- # of unique and repeat residents interacting with urban ag yearly by neighborhood/demographic
- % of residents reporting health related behavior change or improvement related to urban ag
- % of residents reporting improved satisfaction with local, healthy, affordable food options
- % of residents reporting increased community interaction facilitated by urban ag

Milestones

- Year 1: Baseline assessment of resident engagement and satisfaction
- Years 2-5: Continuous improvement of all metrics

Partners

- City of Boston (OFI, DND, BRA, and others)
- Farmers/farmer training programs
- Community health advocates
- Neighborhood associations
- Funders
- Institutions (e.g. schools, churches, hospitals, work places)
- SMEs (e.g. researchers, MARCOM specialists)
- Public assistance agencies