

**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>	October 1, 2014- September 30,2015
Authorized Representative Name:	Gabrielle Russell
Authorized Representative Phone:	(207)-240-6403
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Recipient Organization Name:	Grow L A
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Farm-2-Fork Food Hub Feasibility Study
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-ME-0086
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Lewiston / Maine
Total Awarded Budget:	\$25,000.00

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

Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

Different individual: Name: _____; Email: _____; Phone: _____

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0287. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable sex, marital status, or familial status, parental status religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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: Phase 2 of Farm-2-Fork Feasibility Study**, Deeper Investigation - Karp Resources will conduct a range of data collection and analysis toward forming a composite picture of food production in the region, as well as assets and market opportunities that can be leveraged for growth.

a. Progress Made:

The work plan activities listed for this goal were formed before Grow L+A received the final Phase 1 Feasibility Study. Karp Resources and Grow L+A decided after the phase 1 study to expand the approach to supply and demand assessment by taking a networked approach, leveraging local assets present through food systems collaborations that exist. Grow L+A has moved forward the work for this goal by identifying training needs for our organization, volunteers and community partners. The trainings have enabled local capacity to be built that can identify the food production in the region. (See goal 2)

b. Impact on Community:

The planning work that has occurred positioned Grow L+A, Karp Resources and community partners to gain skills and grow the collective community knowledge base. This approach will have a lasting impact on the community, and the planning work has clarified roles among food systems players in the region, built trust with community partners and grown the skill set of the local community to engage in local food production promotion.

ii. **Goal/Objective 2:** (New goal/objective) Grow the capacity of Grow L+A’s directors, volunteers, stakeholders and the community in understanding food systems, their components, and local actors within the food systems movement to assist in defining opportunities within Bates Mill No. 5 to assist local food systems, and to define the micro food system within the project.

a. Progress Made: Grow L+A, along with stakeholders and community partners, held multiple capacity building events. These events focused on:

- 1) hosting community conversations (2 trainings)
- 2) planning community engagement (4 two hour sessions)
- 3) working with community to define a statement of opportunity (3 two hour sessions)
- 4) developing a long term plan for community goals and values on food and Bates Mill no. 5 (2 two hour sessions)

b. Impact on Community: The downtown community of Lewiston Auburn, including restaurateurs, business owners, and farmers serving local business, residents and artisans participated in some or all of the events listed above. The impact is the community’s ability to speak about food systems; food economy, community values held in regards to food, and craft a vision of how local food could be represented in Bates Mill no. 5.

iii. **Goal/Objective 3:** To publicly release the Karp feasibility study, and provide multiple opportunities for engagement, input, and dialogue about its findings and

recommendations, as well as use the process to determine community interest in next steps.

a. **Progress Made:** The goal was completed through a multi-step process, with over 100 hours invested by board members.

- 1) Grow L+A released the report electronically for public consideration, using our newsletter, email and website for distribution.
- 2) Board members planned the sequencing and logistics for two phases of community engagement to discuss the report.
- 3) Board members hosted seven house meetings that engaged nearly 40 individuals to discuss the report, ask questions, and consider next steps.
- 4) Grow L+A, along with community partners at the Good Food Council, Franco American Heritage Center and St. Mary's Nutrition Center held a public forum for the release and consideration of the Karp feasibility study. Over 100 people attended, ranging in age from 14-100.

b. **Impact on Community:** The community re-engaged on the discussion of Bates Mill no. 5 and the role good food could play in the building and in our community. Momentum was built that is necessary to continue the work of Grow L+A, the Bates Mill developer and to progress the local food movement. The most significant impact was the shift in the communities thinking in how they consider food enterprises and the food economy as a viable and valuable path of economic development.

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, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.** This grant was used for planning and engagement, and did not intend to have direct financial impact. Farmers and food based businesses were engaged in the process, and the overall impact is yet to be seen. There were concrete connections made across the business, municipal, agriculture and economic development sectors.

- 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: 6
 - a. Percent Increase: unable to capture

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?** Activities over the final 6 months included outreach to new populations through informational interviews, and on-farm help with farmers. Discussions expanded the understanding of the role of specific cultural food products and the economic needs unique to the community as well as their contribution to the flow of goods in the mill food system. Developing these relationships is important to expanding the mill focused food system operations into the broader community food systems value chain. Having enough business entities committed to space in the mill and ones that are a good fit for economic and social development is critical to moving the mill development forward.

4. **Discuss your community partnerships.**

- i. **Who are your community partners?** Community partners are the various agencies, organizations and advocacy groups that have a commitment to local food and sustainable economic development; some of these that have been engaged by Grow L+A include Lewiston-Auburn Economic Growth Council (LAEGC), AVCOG, Maine Rural Partners, Maine People’s Alliance, and members of the City of Lewiston’s planning and economic development departments, as well as members of the city councils of both Lewiston-Auburn, the mayor of Auburn and city manager in Lewiston. **Independent Retailers Shared Services Cooperative (IRSSC)**, which will develop and manage the grocery entity in Bates Mill 5. **CEI**, a nonprofit devoted to rural business development and finance in Maine. **St. Mary’s Nutrition Center**, which promotes access to healthy food, particularly for Lewiston-Auburn’s most economically vulnerable residents, through organizing, advocacy, and education. **Developer Tom Platz & Platz Associates** (Architects and Engineers) has successfully developed, designed, and renovated eight other buildings in the Bates Mill complex. **Good Food Council of Lewiston Auburn (GFCLA)**, a diverse group of community leaders committed to addressing the challenges identified in the Community Food Assessment. **Cultivating Community**, a nonprofit that trains local immigrants in the business of farming in Maine and accessing markets. **Fluid Farms**, a start-up grower of freshwater fish and produce using the science of aquaponics. **Food Joy**, a non-profit organic farm that promotes community health through cooking and eating together. **Bates College Department of Environmental Studies**, whose students are finding numerous research and hands-on educational opportunities through Five-2-Farm. **Androscoggin Land Trust**, which is committed to farmland conservation. **Lewiston-Auburn Farmers’ Market**, one of Central Maine’s fastest growing farmers’ markets, already located in the Bates Mill 5 parking lot. **YMCA, Central Maine Medical Center, and Central Maine Orthopedics** are working collaboratively to develop a Healthy Living Center co-located within Bates Mill No. 5. **Baxter Brewing Co.**, and other independent retailers, who recognize the broad economic benefit of Five-2-Farm for business in Lewiston-Auburn.
 - ii. **How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?** Our community partners were integral members of the feedback to the Karp report, and were key to the widespread community engagement Grow L+A garnered as part of the charrettes and forum. Their input shaped the process and the results, offered ideas as to how Bates Mill No. 5 can be a central component in L-A’s food economy, as well as impacted Grow L+A’s path forward
 - iii. **How will they continue to contribute to your project’s future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant?** Any ongoing work centered on local food and economic revitalization requires buy-in from the community at-large. As part of Grow L+A’s ongoing engagement process, we will work to partner more intentionally. In Grow L+A’s phase 2 of the engagement process, our plan is to continue to work at strengthening these partnerships and find ways to support the work and projects that other organizations are doing in L-A. Future plans are already underway to collaborate more deeply with the Good Food Council, St. Mary’s Nutrition Center, and LAEGC.
5. **Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?**

Yes, we have employed contractors for our work; Nicola Chin, a local organizational development consultant, was hired to conduct a goal alignment and visioning workshop with the committed

volunteers engaged in moving our work forward. A clear set of short term (one year) goals and longer term (3-5 years), relative to the food hub and feasibility study results were created. Karp Resources was also contracted to provide the foundational round of study that lead to phase two- the deeper investigation. (This report was funded from in kind match, and was not a consultant paid for with funds from this grant). The first phase of their work has allowed the organization and its community partners to better understand individual and collective roles in food systems change. A major contribution of this study was a narrowed scope of work for Grow L+A in its efforts, defining the mill and its inhabitants as a micro food system, and clarifying its connection to the larger food system and local food promotion efforts.

Grow L+A contracted consultant Mark Hews to provide project management and to assist Grow L+A in the engagement work of phase 1, which included follow-up required specific to the Karp Report. Hews' role including designing and implementing a process that would solicit specific feedback from the larger community, including key stakeholders. This process encompassed seven stakeholder charrettes and the public forum, and directly engaged more than 100 residents of Lewiston and Auburn. Additionally, Hews also conducted a number of board trainings designed to help members understand the specific of the local food economy, as well as identify key linkages existing between Grow L+A, it's efforts in redeveloping Bates Mill No. 5, and the community at-large. This included other organizations and businesses, as well as local government officials, elected and non-elected. Part of Hews' work including laying the foundation in order to forge these relationships.

The third central component to Hews' role, as contracted with Grow L+A (and the one the board is directly involved with at-present), is the ongoing public engagement process. This includes additional time working with the board and working groups, like the Bates Mill No. 5 Working Group to broaden community support and solidify existing partnerships, while finding and forging new ones with like-minded organizations, groups, and businesses. This will include an additional round of "kitchen table" meetings, as well as a method for processing long-term sustainability. The goal is to move the community to a higher-level of readiness in relation to the redevelopment of Bates Mill No. 5.

Also, Grow L+A contracted Jim Baumer in July, to support the efforts of Hews and the board, serving in the capacity of project coordinator. Baumer's role was specific to the planning, coordination, and implementation of the stakeholder charrettes. These occurred during a very condensed window of time, and were essential, leading up to the rollout of the Karp Report and Grow L+A's public forum. This involved meeting board members individually, initially, then working collectively with them, while coordinating meeting schedules, times, and the logistics of putting on seven meeting in 12 days. Additionally, another aspect of Baumer's role was public outreach and promotion (as well as facilitating messaging with other board members) via local media, newsletters, and social media, all part of a plan broaden the awareness of Grow L+A's public engagement process. Baumer also coordinated notes taken at the stakeholder charrettes and public forum, summarizing all of this information in a summary made available to the Grow L+A board and posted on their website.

The duration of both Hews and Baumer time with Grow L+A ran from early July to the end of September.

6. **Have you publicized any results yet?*** Yes.

- i. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?** The goal was completed through a multi-step process, with over 100 hours invested by board members.
- 1) Grow L+A released the report electronically for public consideration, using our newsletter, email and website for distribution.
 - 2) Board members planned the sequencing and logistics for two phases of community engagement to discuss the report.
 - 3) Board members hosted seven house meetings that engaged nearly 40 individuals to discuss the report, ask questions, and consider next steps.
 - 4) Grow L+A, along with community partners at the Good Food Council, Franco American Heritage Center and St. Mary's Nutrition Center held a public forum for the release and consideration of the Karp feasibility study. Over 100 people attended, ranging in age from 14-100.

Grow L+A initiated a series of community meeting in September billed as "stakeholder charrettes." Seven of these charrettes were hosted by board members in their homes. The goal was to gather local stakeholders that the board identified as having an interest in the redevelopment of Bates Mill No. 5. The purpose was to allow them an opportunity to weigh-in on the Karp Resources Report.

- ii. **To whom did you publicize the results?** The results were shared with the at large community of Lewiston Auburn. Several news releases went out to local media outlets, as well as a press advisory. The *Sun-Journal* ran a series of articles on Grow L+A about these engagement efforts in August and September prior to the public forum. Board members Shanna Cox, Peter Flanders, and Gabrielle Russell were interviewed. Board members also appeared on a local morning drive radio program hosted in Lewiston-Auburn, *The Breakfast Club*. Additionally, *WGAN-560 AM*, a Portland-based radio station, interviewed President, Shanna Cox, about the public forum and what Grow L+A hoped to accomplish in rolling out the information from the Karp Report.
- iii. **How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?** The stakeholder charrettes were held from September 4 through September 11. Nearly 80 stakeholders were invited, with 38 attending. In addition, a public forum was planned for the Franco-American Center in Lewiston on September 16th at 5:30 p.m. This meeting, which was open to everyone, highlighted the findings of the report, compiled by Karp Resources. More than 100 residents attended.

*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?** Yes.

- i. **If so, how did you collect the information?** The information was collected by notes taken at charrettes, as well as from the small groups and plenary of the forum.
- ii. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?**
 - a. "Some farmers have the ability to expand but didn't want to. Why? She noticed that sweets, fats, and oils are some of the highest grossing products in the area, and wonders how that reflects on the dietary choices of the region."
 - b. "BUILDING MOMENTUM has a huge impact (on the naysayers and on making progress). That alone can shift the dialogue. The work ahead is to build momentum and tap into people's networks. The building is 8 acres – it can be many things, and it needs to be many things."

- c. "Having a food hub that's locally sourced isn't financially viable. Too seasonal. It has to be year round. You can't do that in Maine if you rely on locally grown in Maine. Can't make the required investment to process it only for 8 weeks and then shut down. Distribution can be local, but not the sourcing."
- d. "Great collaboration with small nonprofits that could be replicated in many ways. Preach collaboration is a very big thing. The more it's done and modeled, the more communication will happen and less polarization. GLA could even do this more. 20% are African immigrants in Lewiston; their stores are imported, but could be replicated in LA. Growing Hallal eating. Dormant agricultural land in Lewiston and Auburn could serve more than this area."

8. Budget Summary:

- i. **As part of the LFPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:**
- ii. **Did the project generate any income?** No.
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

9. 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).**
 - a. **Partner early**-Our organization learned the importance of working collaboratively with community partners in the planning stage of the project. Grow L+A views itself as an organization that supports community engagement and economic development, but did not spend enough time early in the grant period connecting with those in our community well versed in local food systems.
 - b. **Build capacity**- Our organization needed to address capacity issues in our organization, and in our community to have meaningful discussions about food, food economy, and economic development. The results of focusing on building capacity will serve not only the future work of Grow L+A, but that of the local food movement and the community at large.
 - c. **Engage the community**- Grow L+A received feedback that displayed the gratitude, willingness and interest in the community members, business owners, farmers, people of faith and artisans in being included in community conversations. Most notably, people indicated that cross-sector conversations were beneficial in building understanding and networks.
- ii. **If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:** n/a, see above
- 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:** This project required a lot of time in conversation and building relationships. For those looking to engage the community in meaningful ways and to start or further build a movement in community, value the time of those who will build the relationships. Provide support for learning and training, and build in a timeline that allows for the multiple stages.

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.** Grow L+A is currently implementing a phase 2 plan for community engagement. This would be a continuation of the public engagement process. Currently, the Bates Mill No. 5 Working Group has been considering plans for a public market, with the goal being to engage public input through additional public events. Consultant Mark Hews has provided a "toolkit" with specific steps that will assist in facilitating the public engagement process. There are specific steps, which board members have been involved with, via several working group trainings, including the recent November Bates Mill No. 5 Working Group.
- 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?** Grow L+A will be continuing its work with stakeholders, volunteers and the community to use the following steps to guide how this work moves forward.
 - Stage 1: Develop a clear statement of the issue or the opportunity.
 - Stage 2: Defining desired outcomes for public participation.
 - Stage 3: Decide who "the public is" for your public engagement process.
 - Stage 4: Choose appropriate setting and methods.
 - Stage 5: Decide who will organize the engagement process.
 - Stage 6: Evaluation Methodology
 - Stage 7: Implement public engagement process.
 - Stage 8: Evaluate using methods (stage 6)
 - Stage 9: Keep the public informed along the way.