

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

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. As stated in the FMPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future FMPP or Local Food 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 FMPP 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 FMPP staff to avoid delays:

FMPP Phone: 202-690-4152; Email: USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-690-4152

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

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2015-September 29, 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	Valerie Venecia
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Recipient Organization Name:	City of El Paso, MCAD-Downtown Artist and Farmers Market
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Downtown Artist and Farmers Market Marketing and Expansion Project
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15FMPPTX0022
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	El Paso, Texas
Total Awarded Budget:	100,000.00

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

- Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).
 Different individual: Name: _____; Email: _____; Phone: _____

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1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP 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:** *Provide Direct to Consumer Marketing, advertising, and outreach so as to reach new audiences and ensure consistent, sustained increase in Market Attendance.*

- a. **Progress Made:** *Marketing ad campaigns on behalf of our special events, new quarterly evening markets, and educational program series were delivered through print publications on Ft. Bliss and throughout the City of El Paso. Social media boosts provided a rapid turnaround at a low cost in addition to tracking interest, activity, and commentary while reaching a wide audience. This reporting period however, an important new outlet was implemented through a partnership with Spectrum Reach Communications. This new media outlet allowed the Market for the first time ever to have a nearly constant presence both locally and throughout the region via cable and local TV channels and digital internet ad campaigns. 15-second commercial reels were created to promote market expansions, educational programming, and the launch of the Farmer Grower Co-Op project. The digital and commercial ads targeted a multitude of audiences through the various topics covered such as cycling, health and wellness, local foods, sustainability, and the Co-Op.*

A seasonal photography project was coordinated on behalf of growers participating in the Farmers Market. After observing customers at the Market and reviewing responses to surveys and evaluations, the photography project was launched as a means of demonstrating what growing “looks like” in our sensitive desert climate. Both visiting and local customers constantly inquire why we have so few produce stands, or why we don’t have items you would regularly find in a commercial grocery store such as pineapples or other tropical fruits. Photos were taken at participating growers’ farm plots during the four seasons of the year along with photos of their harvests. Three sets of photographs were printed of each site to be on display weekly at the Farmers Market, within the growers’ booth spaces, and at the City of El Paso libraries and recreation centers where each farm plot is located.

- b. **Impact on Community:** *Digital Internet and television ad campaigns during the final six months of the FMPP Grant proved to be a much more cost effective, impactful method of promoting the Market than commercial highway billboards. Where billboards easily cost more than double the amount for a fraction of time (typically one-week cycles), Market staff has determined that any available marketing funds should be used towards this outlet in the future. Digital ads and television commercials are not only broadcasted locally here in El Paso and the military base at Ft. Bliss, but throughout the various states of our southwest region. This has afforded us the ability to find our voice in approaching marketing from a tourism perspective and resulted in increased attendance among visitors outside of El Paso. Utilizing these new services which Spectrum*

provided allowed the market to tap into the company's intricate method of collecting consumer data and activity. The percentage of visitors attending the Market from out of town and/or for the first time jumped from 50% in 2016 to 75% during this first cycle of advertising in 2017. This increase proves that the digital and commercial ad campaigns were effective in reaching new audiences and travelers.

The seasonal photography project aims to educate viewers of the challenges facing Chihuahua Desert growers which include extreme weather conditions and scarce water resources due to drought. Additionally, consumers are often unaware of what foods grow here or do not know how to prepare what is sold at the market. - Customers frequently admire our patty-pan squash and Armenian heirloom cucumbers, but are reluctant to purchase due to lack of familiarity and inability to utilize such foods at home as part of the diet. Placement of the photos at the Market –especially when near the cooking demos during peak season- has led to much dialogue between market staff, workshop leaders, growers, and customers. Armed with new understanding of seasonality and growing conditions has greatly improved sales and support of local growers. Placement of the photos within public facilities has allowed us to extend our presence outside of the four-hour Market Saturday.

ii. **Goal/Objective 2:** *Increase access to healthy foods and public resources through expansion of the Market.*

*a. **Progress Made:** Extensive marketing campaigns helped generate interest and publicize the Market among new and visiting audiences. However, special events featuring extended market hours solidified the increase of customer loyalty among our base of “regulars.” New special events and evening markets, featured expanded educational programming such as the Eat Healthy, Locally, and Seasonally Cooking Demonstrations, Garden Art/Grow Your Own Food, and Health and Wellness workshop series. This expanded programming provided customers with increased opportunities to visit the market and participate in activities that encouraged adopting healthier diets and increasing physical activity while continuing to expose them to local produce. Armed with new knowledge and understanding of our regional food system and easy methods of implementing desert crops into their diet empowered customers in ways that enabled them to be more supportive of our growers and cottage industry vendors through their patronage and consumption. Public demand for fresh locally produced foods have increased as a direct result of these programs. Growers are encouraged by their sales increases, one in particular noting that consecutive “sellout Saturdays” afforded them the ability to pay their entire labor force this harvest season. The increased attendance has also attracted new community partners – notably health related organizations and resources. Cottage industry vendors have also jumped on the healthy eating bandwagon. Increased requests from customers has led them to adjust their menus to offer healthier options using locally sourced ingredients readily found at the Market.*

*b. **Impact on Community:** The synergy between vendors, community partners, patrons and workshop leaders has been incredible to witness. As a result of the market expansion, sales and collaborations amongst vendors have increased*

while also building a sense of community. New partnerships and collaborations have further enhanced the overall market experience. Health care providers and students from the University of Texas at El Paso have learned the benefits of the Market as a space for access to the general public. In turn, such organizations have continued to offer screenings for a wide range of health related issues from blood pressure tests to HIV and Hepatitis screenings. Their presence has also led to vendor products being sold within new venues such as hospitals and shelters furthering the access to fresh foods and locally produced artisanal items.

iii. **Goal/Objective 3:** *Facilitate increase in consistency and expansion of current and new farmers and growers.*

a. Progress Made: *With only three farmers markets in the area on Saturday mornings (the EPDAFM, Ardovino's in Sunland Park, New Mexico, and the Las Cruces Craft and Farmers Market), there are limited outlets for local growers to sell their produce and increasing competition amongst existing markets to offer produce to the public. As a result both growers and consumers suffer from a lack of access to selling and buying fresh local foods. Few growers in our region have the capacity to sell at the market at all, let alone multiple markets due to financial burdens or a lack of transportation, staffing and other circumstances preventing them from doing so. In response to grower and customer feedback, the DAFM's "Farmer Grower Co-Op" pilot project launched in May 2017 to offer growers expanded vending opportunities while improving public access to their fresh, healthy foods. Our co-op format makes it easier for growers to participate at the DAFM. Growers coordinate with Market staff and student interns to drop off or pick up produce in time for Market on Saturday mornings. Market interns and contracted staff sell the produce and agricultural products on their behalf at no cost. Payments are issued at the beginning of each month through a contracted partnership with fiscal agent and local foods business One Grub Community Meatless Merchants. The co-op program began with just five growers and expanded to 12 by the end of the season. An unexpected result of this program was that three new co-op produce vendors, chose to become permanent parts of the Market after benefitting from the great sales achieved as a result of strong customer attendance. While this came as a surprise, Market staff and interns were encouraged as it allowed us to offer the Co-Op service to additional new growers and participants, furthering the improved consistent access to fresh local foods and production capacity building. The few instances in which produce did not sell out led to produce donations within different homeless and transitional living centers, providing individuals within sensitive populations with access to healthy fresh foods. Other growers saw the benefit of teaming up and we witnessed new partnerships develop between the La Semilla Food Center Farm Fresh Bus that travels through rural areas within the region furthering the access within our food deserts. Other left over produce was sold to participating food trucks and restaurants through a makeshift Farm to Truck/Farm to Fork approach. This excited Market staff and interns as another outlet to pursue in strengthening and furthering the expansion of access to and support of the local foods movement.*

b. Impact on Community: *As the Farmer-Grower Co-Op project is a very new initiative for the DAFM, there was a large learning curve for all parties involved*

including staff, growers and the general public... Customers and vendors alike were curious to know what the project entailed, who it would benefit, the reason the City of El Paso would take on such an effort, and the effects the venture anticipated to achieve as a direct result. Market staff were very encouraged by the large amount of interest and support through increased patronage. Consistent, sustained increases in consumption, sales, and support of local foods were observed as a result of the increased education, outreach and projects that saw fruition due to the FMPP grant.

- iv. **Goal/Objective 4: Stimulate local economy, support small local businesses.**
- a. Progress Made:** *The USDA FMPP grant helped our growing Market achieve much success with regards to local-regional economy stimulation and support of small businesses. Record sales were reported by vendors willing to share their data with us in addition to all of the new collaborations, partnerships, and expansions within their enterprises. It is exciting that so many of our vendors have gone on to share their products within different establishments and facilities around the city and region, with a handful even moving to open their own brick and mortar store fronts. Several of our growers have benefitted from these expansions as well, selling the fruits of their labor to fellow cottage industry vendors, food trucks, and restaurants so that their ingredients and menus can be labeled locally sourced as well. As a result of the EPDAFM's marketing campaigns, expanded educational and enrichment offering and the launch of the co-op booth, the market saw an increase of both vendor and audience attendance. In fiscal year 2017, the DAFM's attendance increased 21% over the previous year. This is an incredible achievement and exceeded the presenting department's goal for attendance which was set at an 8% increase.*
 - b. Impact on Community:** *It is an exciting time to be a part of the grassroots shop small and local foods movement. The end result of all of the expansions, collaborations, establishments of store fronts, and increased production capacity among our growers means that our shoppers have additional outlets for consistently keeping their dollars within our community. Increased attendance at our weekly market directly translates to increased sales not only at the market, but throughout Downtown El Paso as families pay for parking, visit neighboring restaurants, shop and visit our museums.*
- v. **Goal/Objective 5: Improve El Paso quality of life through increased consumption of healthy, locally produced agricultural products and participation in educationally diverse, fun programming.**
- a. Progress Made:** *El Paso residents and tourists' quality of life improved through attendance and participation in our educational programs. Local foods cooking demonstrations and tastings, combined with nutrition and health and wellness workshop series, and gardening/local foods production instruction provided participants with the tools needed to create easy healthy meals, household cleaners, and home remedies for common ailments –all using fresh ingredients available at the Market.*
 - b. Impact on Community:** *The market provides a safe space for learning and for people to spend constructive quality time with their friends and families. Armed with knowledge about where our food comes from, empowered the public to not*

only adopt healthier habits and diets, but also to the ways that they can be more supportive of the local foods movement and our food system.

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:** 10
 - ii. **Number of jobs retained:** 3 retained through the duration of the grant funding. *Market expansions have also led to new budgeting within the department for special event support staff during high volume programming.*
 - iii. **Number of indirect jobs created:** 15; *several growers and vendors have hired Market student interns and volunteers as extra help during peak harvest seasons and as sales associates within their shops.*
 - iv. **Number of markets expanded:** 1
 - v. **Number of new markets established:** *While not established by the City of El Paso-MCAD, it is noteworthy that several (at least 4 to the best of our knowledge) new Artisan Farmers Markets have opened up around town on Sundays within the past year. These new markets offer additional vending opportunities for our small businesses and growers outside of Downtown El Paso expanding exposure to local foods which benefit farmers and consumers. One Market used our guidelines -nearly verbatim- which indicates that the public and other event organizers trust MCAD and the Downtown Artist and Farmers Market's experience as one of the only permitted and certified farmers market within the City of El Paso. It also shows that the market has innovated a market model that has created a demand for similar programming within different communities in El Paso.*
 - vi. **Market sales increased by \$72,578.15 and increased by 48%.** *It is important to note that these numbers are based on comparison of sales reports submitted by less than 27% of 152 active vendors in Fiscal Year 2016-17 with sales reports submitted by less than 20% of 130 active vendors in Fiscal Year 2015-16.*
 - vii. **Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:** 32 (average of 6 per market)
 - a. **Percent Increase:** 44% increase from beginning of the funding period.
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?** *Yes, we were successful in the expansion of our customer and new business base as well as within low income/access zones and diverse populations. These expansions are a direct result of the support awarded through the FMPP grant and the projects and marketing that was delivered because of this funding. Through new marketing campaign methods within local and cable television channels, and public transportation stops, our customer base grew among all populations in the City of El Paso and within tourism throughout the region. New businesses became attracted to the Market because of the extensive marketing and improvements in attendance and sales therefore our vendor base has grown as well.*
4. **Discuss your community partnerships.**
 - i. **Who are your community partners?** *The Downtown Artist and Farmers Market partners and collaborates with a wide variety of community partners. Examples include grassroot groups like Velo Paso Bicycle Pedestrian Coalition, and EP Bike Month, the Anthony Youth Farm and Sol y Tierra Growers Cooperative, academic organizations such as the*

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the UTEP Hispanic Nursing Association and the UTEP Public Health Departments, various cancer related societies, and fine arts organizations such as Carambola Community Music and Tumbleweed Dance Collective just to name a few. We also partner with the UTEP Center for Civic Engagement and United Way of El Paso County for volunteer and internship recruitment.

- ii. **How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?** *We are grateful to the non-profit organizations who have collaborated with us to enhance our educational programs and workshop series through the donation of their time to provide free activities and health screenings. Many of these collaborations led to paid teaching opportunities furthering our support of the local economy and community and the expansion of our Market and programming. Our workshop leaders, instructors, and partners are a very important asset to our growth and establishment of consistency in our customer loyalty base.*
- iii. **How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?** *Although the FMPP grant expired as of the end of September, it is encouraging that several of our community partners have continued to use the Market as a comfortable, non-intimidating space to access the public in each of their individual efforts to share their information and resources. One Grub Community Meatless Merchants -our fiscal agents in the Farmer-Grower Co-Op project- has joined in our passion for the local foods movement and farmer-grower support to the extent that they have offered to continue providing the service at a fraction of the cost (nearly free of charge) through the off season for any producers needing drop in service as the seasons change. They have also committed to permanently implementing locally sourced fresh foods in their rotating menu as well as furthering their pay-it-forward meal service by providing access within low-income communities. Our community partners will continue to enhance the overall Market experience through their commitment to serve the public and the City's commitment to support health and wellness, the arts, and local economy.*

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project? *The Farmer-Grower Co-Op project and expansion of our educational programming would not at all have been possible without the help of our contracted workers. Student interns and their volunteers assisted with collection of surveys and evaluations among our customer base and workshop participants as well as sales reports from our vendors. They assisted with customer service and sales during Co-Op project operations. Student interns also contributed to the results of the FMPP project through the enhancement and expansion of our e-newsletter and social media marketing. Viewer and readership increased by over 50% through the use of the e-newsletter which allowed EPDAFM to promote the Market and our special events and programs, share recipes from cooking demonstrations that implemented produce available through our growers, showcase new vendors and current vendor growth and successes.*

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

- i. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?** *We have not yet published any results other than through the e-newsletter which helped track certain milestones and accomplishments over the course of the FMPP grant. An infographic is set to be published using the numbers collected from our survey, evaluation, and sales reports.*
- ii. **To whom did you publicize the results?** *N/A*
- 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).

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

- i. **If so, how did you collect the information?** *Feedback was collected throughout the course of the FMPP grant through the collection of dot surveys and evaluations, Survey Monkey evaluations and surveys, and individual interviews collected on site at the Market by staff.*
- ii. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?** *Examples of specific comments include the following:*
 - a. *From customers:*
 1. *"It's nice to do our vegan grocery shopping at the farmers market every week. There are so many vegan options in one place its like a vegan paradise. We love that there is always new vegan food items every time we go!"*
 2. *"Parking is starting to become an issue. It would be nice to have a free Saturday shuttle that serves the nearest neighborhoods with the farmers market as one of the stops."*
 3. *"Love the produce, artwork and natural skincare! Very friendly environment and awesome sense of community."*
 4. *"The best place in town to pick up one of a kind art and gifts. The stuff you'll find here you can't get anywhere else. Lots of hometown pride in the products found here. Don't forget about all the fresh produce and organic goods."*
 5. *"The El Paso Art and Farmers Market is extremely enjoyable and a great place to buy seasonal produce. A must visit, take a relaxing stroll and enjoy the artists work from our local community. I have purchased art work and produce from this market and extremely satisfied with my purchases."*
 6. *"Love, love, love El Paso's downtown farmers market. Always a great attitude from the vendors, my family and I love the live music, arts and crafts for the kids and cooking classes! Just love the overall atmosphere!"*
 7. *"I made a great haul! El Paso area produces some delicious tomatoes and peppers."*
 - b. *From Vendors:*
 1. *"The special events, free workshops, live entertainment, and other such programming are important to our success as vendors."*
 2. *"The opening of my store front and growth of my small business would not have been possible without the Downtown Artist and Farmers Market. Thank you for the opportunity!"*
 3. *"Having markets outside of the normal Saturday market really helps promote the idea of farmers markets as a lifestyle, I think. And any help with marketing is ALWAYS appreciated, since most small businesses have trouble putting money into that in the beginning (which is when it's*

most often needed).” (in reference to the addition of special events and evening markets).

4. “As a vendor, this market changed my family's life. As a shopper, this market opened us up to all kinds of local produce and hand-made, one of a kind crafts that are truly beautiful. As a citizen of El Paso, this market has deepened our friendship with the community and town. We are so blessed to be a part of it!”
5. “We have been a vendor here for 1 year and love the attendance every Saturday. Every person we meet are very friendly and love our handcrafted products. The other vendors are friendly and helpful. We, Gpa & Gma Craft Corner, really enjoy supporting the local community. If you don't attend, you are missing out of good food, local growers, and local handcrafters.
6. “These is the place to be !! For a great time and excellent experience , fresh foods ,great art , music and most of all fresh home grown veggies and seasonal fruits. You'll love the vendors too!”
7. “Wonderful ambiance. Feels like the hilly streets of San Francisco. Growing selection and usually always fun or interesting things to learn taste and do. Love this market.”
8. “This is Panini Bus, the Downtown artist farmers market in a great family friendly venue at union plaza. We support our local vendors using products like jams from the Homestead artisans, Texas season salt, Hatch green chile, fresh greens and squash, and other local vendors. Great family fun in a friendly atmosphere!”
9. “The farmers market and artist is an AWESOME place to meet new creative people. This place is transforming lives one person at a time!!! Come out and see for yourself.”

8. Budget Summary:

- i. **As part of the FMPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:**
- ii. **Did the project generate any income?** *n/a*
 - 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).** *Positive lessons learned stem from new risks that were taken in advertising and marketing. We learned that television commercials and digital advertising have a more measureable impact at a fraction of the cost when compared with billboard advertisements. We learned that while other Farmers Markets and vendors may view their peers as competition, there simply are not enough growers available in our community to supply new markets and meet the public demand. New markets increase exposure to local foods but also highlight the limitations of our infrastructure and natural resources to meet demand. There is a large learning curve with regards to access and capacity building within our community and*

understand the EPDAFM is a critical component of the local foods movement. Efforts to educate the public, and our vendors are being made to alleviate competitive attitudes in hopes that further collaboration and mutual support will take place. These efforts are currently being made through dialogue and in presentations during vendor forums. In the near future, promotional materials may be created to further facilitate support of the local foods movement as a whole.

With regards to the piloting of the Farmer-Grower Co-Op Program we learned that it is important to offer drop-in service for growers. Sudden drastic changes in the weather in our desert climate can lead to the need to harvest produce ahead of schedule, resulting in unexpected abundance. Offering drop-in participation as part of the services provided by the Farmer-Grower Co-Op project proved to be a huge help for small scale, fledgling farms in our area. This service helped prevent growers from taking a total loss on their produce because of inclement weather.

- ii. **If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:** *n/a*
- 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:** *As a result of the great response and support of the Farmer-Grower Co-Op pilot project we are excited to continue to provide this important service to our growers and create a manual for other area Farmers Markets to use and implement within their locations. Everyone needs to eat three times a day and it is our goal that through consistent access and exposure to fresh healthy foods among all of our farmers markets, customers will more readily make better choices.*

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.** *Without funds for marketing and advertising we will continue to take advantage of free social media and digital internet communication outlets to share existence to the public. Now that we have the attention of new audiences, it is crucial to our continued growth and expansion that constant communication continue. The e-newsletter which has reached over 1,000 followers has also proven to be an effective method of sharing information and announcements free of charge beyond commercial advertising. The City of El Paso has taken into consideration the tremendous growth-over 21% increase in attendance this past year alone- and will continue to include teaching artist fees as part of our operational budget to maintain customer loyalty.*
- 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?** *We are excited to continue to build upon the Farmer-Grower Co-Op project momentum and will begin recruitment of additional participants for the peak season in January. We are also excited to formalize a Farm-to Fork/Farm to Food Truck program as a direct result of the interest generated through the Co-Op project. Increased demand for locally produced ingredients means that research will need to be done to find small scale growers in the area who are not currently participating in farmers market sales opportunities.*