

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 your assigned grant specialist to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-720-0300

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

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2015-September 29, 2017
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Recipient Organization Name:	Local Environmental Agriculture Project, Inc
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	LEAP Community Kitchen Incubator and Local Food Hub
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15-LFPP-VA-0008
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Roanoke, Virginia
Total Awarded Budget:	\$100,000

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: Support an increase in production of local foods

1. Progress Made: The Kitchen opened in May 2016. Between May 2016 and October 2017, The Kitchen supported 37 local food businesses. Additionally, 5 organizations utilize The Kitchen to offer classes to the public, educational programs, and training in food preparation and food safety. No LFPP funds were used to pay for the construction of The Kitchen.
2. During the 2016 and 2017 Mobile Market seasons (May-October), LEAP increased our wholesale purchases to supply the expanded Mobile Market schedule. All food (fruits, vegetables, eggs, honey) sold on the Mobile Market is produced within 100-miles of Roanoke. From May-October 2016, LEAP purchased over \$25,000 in food from local farmers. From May-October 2017, LEAP purchased over \$28,000 in food from local farmers. This is more than triple the amount from the 2015 season (\$9,000). No LFPP funds were used to purchase food from local farmers.
3. Based on farmer input, LEAP hosted monthly winter markets in Grandin Village in 2016 and 2017 (November-December 2016, January-March 2017 and November-December 2017). These additional markets allowed farmers to expand their production through the winter months. The monthly winter markets supported 12 food vendors and an additional \$40,000 in sales of local products.
4. In December 2016, a local food aggregator, Good Food Good People (GFGP), announced that they were scaling back their business. In order to continue to support local small-scale farmers and increase production of local food, LEAP took over the established Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Due to our existing food hub infrastructure, we were able to add a new program, which directly supports local farmers who sell wholesale to LEAP. In our pilot season, the FarmShare sold 141 shares and purchased over \$48,000 in local produce. No LFPP funds were used to purchase local food from farmers.
5. In February and March 2017, LEAP hosted a series of “Farmer Listening Sessions” around the Roanoke Valley to hear directly from the farmers what they saw as barriers to producing food for the local market. From those meetings, committees of farmers have started meeting to tackle some of those issues including consumer education, local food marketing, and expanded food hub.

- b. Impact on Community:

1. The owner of Lick Run Urban Farm, who sold LEAP produce for the Mobile Market in 2015 and 2016, stated that the Mobile Market wholesale account helps him stay in business and meet his goals. In 2017, he increased land in production and tailored his product offerings to meet the needs of the Mobile Market. Consistent and reliable sales to the Mobile Market help Lick Run plan for the future.

2. In 2016, LEAP purchased local food from 32 producers in the region that we sold on the Mobile Market (14% increase from 2015). In 2017, we added more producers for the Mobile Market and FarmShare for a total of 45. Additionally, in 2017 we increased our weekly Mobile Market stops to 10, up from 9 in 2016 (5 in 2015). The additional Mobile Market stops increased food access to more neighborhoods each week. Through the Farm Share (aggregated CSA model), we support large volume wholesale purchases from farmers consistently throughout the growing season. These regular purchases, discussed pre-season, allow the farmers to grow to meet consumer demand.
 3. LEAP will continue to encourage farmers to produce value added products in The Kitchen for retail and/or wholesale markets, to further diversify their business, and to process in-season produce. To encourage this, LEAP offers market farmers a discounted rate on time spend in The Kitchen. LEAP farmers market vendors also get a discount on membership at The Kitchen. To date, three market vendors have become Kitchen members. As a program of LEAP, members of The Kitchen are connected to farmers, market outlets, and wholesale sourcing through our network of partners and stakeholders. One caterer is committed to sourcing local meats for their clients whenever possible and another member's business plan is to purchase local honey to flavor and sell wholesale. One member, who preps in The Kitchen for a local café and restaurant (due to limited equipment at the restaurant) buys local in-season produce from farmers who sell at LEAP markets or who sell wholesale to LEAP for the FarmShare and Mobile Market.
- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Expand access to healthy local foods in low-income, low-access neighborhoods
1. Progress Made: In April 2016, LEAP purchased and installed a walk-in cooler for the Mobile Market Food Hub, located in empty warehouse space in the Goodwill Industry of the Valleys facility. Prior to the start of the 2017 market season (May), we expanded our existing walk-in to add more square footage. The expanded walk-in space allowed LEAP serve more communities and people in 2017 via the Mobile Market and the FarmShare.
 2. The Mobile Market had 10 stops in 2017 (up from 5 in 2015 and 9 in 2016). All stops are located in or contiguous to low-income, low-access neighborhoods. The Mobile Market participated in a number of community outreach events from October 2015-September 2017. LEAP staff became active in neighborhood associations that host Mobile Market stops- we talked at meetings and formed relationships with neighborhood leaders. We did cooking demonstrations at senior housing centers, community events like the Health Fair at the Hope Center, and parenting classes through social services. The Mobile Market also appeared at street festivals and donated unsold produce to community organizations.
- b. Impact on Community:
1. The Mobile Market increased access to fresh, local food in 10 neighborhoods in 2016 and 2017. The Mobile Market (season May-

October) processed almost 6,000 transactions (2,926 in 2016 and 3,000 in 2017), including cash purchases and Healthy Food Incentive (HFI) transactions for low income shoppers (232 in 2016 and 363 in 2017). HFI transactions include SNAP-EBT users, Medicaid members, and low income senior citizens. Using an average household size (2.2 people), the Mobile Market served over 13,000 people. Almost all (97% in 2016 and 2017) Mobile Market shopper survey respondents report that the Mobile Market makes it easier for them to purchase fresh local produce and the majority (74% in 2016, 82% in 2017) reported that they increased their fruit and vegetable consumption because of shopping at the market.

2. Starting in January 2017, LEAP began to host a Mobile Market stop at the year-round, weekly West End Farmers Market. The aforementioned aggregator, Good Food Good People, was no longer able to come to the West End Farmers Market. Instead of the market disappearing, LEAP used the Mobile Market and Kitchen Hub infrastructure to source products from local farmers and to provide access to local food to the West End neighborhood and beyond. In 2017, the LEAP Mobile Market table at West End sold over \$14,000 in local food through 1,517 transactions. Using the same average household size, The LEAP Mobile Market table at West End served 3,337 people.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Provide space for food, cooking, and health education and programming

a. Progress Made:

1. LEAP partnered with community organizations like Roanoke Community Garden Association, Virginia Cooperative Extension Family Nutrition Program, and local residents to host food, cooking and health education programming in The Kitchen. A well-known local writer and blogger hosted cooking classes for busy families at The Kitchen. The Kitchen also hosted television cooking shows, book club meetings around local food, and an ethical meat butchery class from a well-known author. In 2017, The Kitchen hosted 40 community events on cooking, food, business, and education.
2. In 2016-2017, LEAP was the host site for an AmeriCorps State Member who focused on community outreach, education, and cooking demonstrations. The AmeriCorps member hosted over 15 cooking demonstrations and provided samples at meetings, presentations, and local events. He served as an assistant at busy Mobile Market stops to engage customers about choosing fresh produce, trying new foods, and how to prepare the fresh food they purchase. Building relationships with both shoppers and community members has proven invaluable as we build the Mobile Market.
3. In January 2017, LEAP hosted the Food Business StartUp program, a series of business education classes for existing, new, and potential small food businesses. Through a partnership with the Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center, new entrepreneurs learned about finances, liability, business structure, marketing, and more. Additionally, in one session LEAP hosted representatives from

Virginia Department of Health and Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to discuss food safety, inspections, and regulatory concerns related to food businesses. The StartUp program also offered four scholarships to new food businesses. To date, two of those scholarship users built operational businesses that sell in the local market.

b. Impact on Community:

1. Currently there is no teaching kitchen in the West End neighborhood or surrounding neighborhoods. In these communities, access to personal vehicles is very low. The Kitchen, as a community education resource, is within easy walking distance for residents of various low income, low access neighborhoods (West End, Mountain View, Loudon/Melrose, Hurt Park, Old Southwest, Northwest).
 2. Within five blocks of The Kitchen, there are also many community organizations including Catholic Charities (refugee resettlement), Ram House (day shelter), and a transitional living center. In 2017, women from Transitional Options for Women joined The Kitchen through a new organization, House of Bread. Finishing their first six-week session in October, House of Bread taught 6 previously incarcerated women job skills and earned them valuable food service training through baking bread. In the summer of 2017, the new Feeding America Southwest Virginia Foodie Truck used The Kitchen as their commissary. They provided fresh, wholesome meals for their summer feeding sites, engaging dozens of volunteers and providing hundreds of meals for needy children.
 3. There were over 20 attendees of the 2017 Food StartUp class. Among respondents to a post-class survey, all (100%) said they better understand the process to start a new food business and all (100%) stated they are more aware of the resources available to them to start a food business. Almost all (80%) agreed that because of the class, they were more likely to start a food business.
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: 3 (Kitchen Manager, FarmShare coordinator, FarmShare assistant)
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: 1 (Mobile Market Manager)
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 10
 - a. The 20 active member businesses/organizations (average of 2 people/member) spend an average of 25% FTE on food-related business.
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: 1 (West End)
 - v. Number of new markets established: 5 (Mobile Market stops)
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$571,130 (FY2014 baseline \$118,000; FY16 and FY17 total \$659,130) for a total of 480% increase from the baseline.
 - a. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 65
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?

In 2016, the Mobile Market traveled weekly to nine low income, low access neighborhoods in Roanoke City. In 2017, that number rose to 10. All new market stops were held in neighborhoods without easy access to fresh foods. Two of the stops explicitly serve Head Start families and families who live in housing provided by the Roanoke Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and two stops serve low-income seniors and people with disabilities who live in a Roanoke Housing and Redevelopment Authority building in NW Roanoke. Three of the stops are located at healthcare centers in low income, low access neighborhoods that serve low income populations. One stop is located at a community center in SE Roanoke, and one at the Veteran Affairs campus. Most stops are located in NW and SE Roanoke, which are low income, medically underserved, and have diverse population of residents who are not as likely to visit other farmers markets in the city. Since the beginning of the grant period, the Mobile Market saw 1,217 HFI transactions, with 220 new customers (18% of all transactions). During the same time at our fixed site markets, there were 1,149 HFI transactions from 232 customers.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.
 - i. Who are your community partners?
 - a. Our partners include Freedom First Credit Union, Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, The West End Center for Youth, TAP Head Start Centers, Roanoke Housing and Redevelopment Authority (including multiple sites), Presbyterian Community Center, Veteran Affairs, Carilion Clinic, New Horizons Healthcare, Roanoke Natural Food Co-op, United Way of the Roanoke Valley, Roanoke Community Garden Association, Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center, Roanoke Department of Social Services, Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), and local farmers and food businesses.
 - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?
 - a. Over the last two years, LEAP partnered with Goodwill Industries of the Valleys to house our Food Hub. Their available warehouse space provided space for dry and cold storage as well as space to prep and pack FarmShares. LEAP hosted regular Mobile Market special stops at the Goodwill location and retains a strong presence in the neighborhood.
 - b. LEAP partnered with Freedom First Credit Union to host the Food Business StartUp and provide scholarships. The credit union, which shares a building with The Kitchen, is a direct line for growing food businesses to access financial education and potentially loans/funding. The scholarships provided low income entrepreneurs to start small food businesses with even less overhead. Other Food Start up partners include Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center, Virginia Department of Health, and Virginia Cooperative Extension.
 - c. TAP Head Start Centers, Roanoke Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Veteran Affairs, Carilion Clinic, New Horizon Healthcare, United Way of Roanoke Valley Department of Social Services have all worked closely with LEAP to promote and spread the word about the LEAP Markets and Healthy Food Incentive programs.
 - d. The Roanoke Natural Food Co-op, VDACS, the local Department of Health, Small Business Development Center, community educators, food businesses and our farmers have provided us with key insights and feedback throughout our first two years of operation of The Kitchen.

- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant?
 - a. We will continue to work closely with Freedom First Credit Union to provide financial education services to food entrepreneurs and to best utilize the community education room that we share in the building where The Kitchen is located.
 - b. Our Mobile Market partners will continue to be crucial to the success of the Mobile Market. All of the Mobile Market site partners helped promote the Mobile Market and encouraged participation in 2016 and 2017. Over the off-season each year (November-March), LEAP staff work very closely with new and existing Mobile Market partners to build, expand, and promote the food access work we do. Mobile Market partners help the various locations become important community events and help spread the word about healthy food access.
 - c. LEAP will continue to work with regulatory authorities, retail outlets and our farmers to ensure that food entrepreneurs are successful in their local food production endeavors.

- 5. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?

Contractors installed equipment in the Kitchen and Food Hub in late April-early May 2016 (security system in Kitchen, walk-in at Food Hub, equipment in Kitchen). The contractors advised us on the most cost effective way to meet our equipment needs (walk-in cooler for Food Hub and security equipment for The Kitchen). In 2017, we worked with Stacey Price of People Make Place, a consultant who has helped us create a foundation and plan for our next stage of development--to turn The Kitchen from a rentable space into a thriving place.

- 6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

 - 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).

We have not yet publicized results about The Kitchen project. The Grand Opening of The Kitchen on April 26th, 2016 had over 200 people in attendance including the Roanoke City Manager, Roanoke City Council members, staff from the Economic Development Authority, staff from the Roanoke-Alleghany Regional Planning Commission, staff from Senator Mark Warner, staff from local Health Department, Virginia Cooperative Extension, farmers, community-based organizations, and food entrepreneurs.

We have had numerous stories in the local and regional media about The Kitchen and The Mobile Market including Roanoke Times (newspaper), Virginia Business magazine, local NPR station, local Fox and NBC stations. Links to these articles can be found on our media page, <http://leapforlocalfood.org/blog/leap-in-the-news/>

Organizations throughout Roanoke, the region, state, and country have been interested in how we planned, built, and manage the Kitchen internally and in close participation with our community partners. The Kitchen, food hub, and Mobile Market have been key stops for numerous conferences

and tours including Invest Health (an initiative of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation), CityWorks (X)po, Roanoke City Green Team, Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Planning Commission, Virginia Farmers Market Association, American Planning Association Virginia Chapter, local college/university classes (Hollins, Roanoke College). We've spoken with and advised many communities who are considering starting a shared commercial kitchen, including Rice and Beans (Blacksburg VA), The Highland Center (Highland County VA), and multiple Invest Health teams (Peoria, IL, Rutgers NJ, Bloomington IL). Additionally, we have spoken with many parties interested in learning more about our Mobile Market. This includes presentations at the Virginia Farmers Market Association Conference, Virginia Farm to Table Conference and conversations with organizations in New Orleans, LA, Washington DC, and Charleston, SC.

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?
 - i. If so, how did you collect the information?
 - a. We have collected feedback in the following ways: surveys of SNAP shoppers, dot surveys to market shoppers, survey of Kitchen members, survey of LEAP Market vendors, farmer listening sessions. We have also collected testimonials from all of these key community members and stakeholders to gain more qualitative feedback and information about the impact of the programs.
 - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?
 - a. Local produce aggregator business owner: "I count the most real benefits of the LEAP programs in the number of farmers that DON'T come to me to say they've quit farming because it's not economically sustainable. The LEAP CSA and Mobile Market demand we serve provides predictable sales with efficient harvest volumes in a fairly-reimbursed climate."
 - b. Kitchen member: "We came to LEAP a little over a year ago... and we absolutely fell in love with the place. Our overhead's gone down about 40% from being here, so we have no plans of going anywhere, as long as they'll have us... It's just been really great to work with."
 - c. Mobile Market shopper: The Mobile Market has "Really been great cause I have to travel on the bus... I don't have to carry heavy things on the bus anymore. Vegetables are heavy, and eggs don't travel well good on the bus. Eggs don't break anymore. There's really no good way to get them here"
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?
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?
 1. Since opening in May 2016, the Kitchen has generated \$14,422 in membership, orientation, and rental fees.
 2. Since the start of the grant period, the Food Hub (Mobile Market and FarmShare) have generated \$182,000 in revenue and the Kitchen generated \$14,222.

3. Revenue was used to pay salaries, purchase equipment, buy a new Mobile Market vehicle, and purchase food for sale.

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. Summarize any lessons learned. Draw from 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. After multiple years running the Mobile Market, our biggest lesson learned has been that community involvement is key. Each participating location should be excited, engaged, and ready to help us share our service.
 - b. Similarly, success at The Kitchen is based on building relationships with businesses, entrepreneurs, and the community. The physical space is the catalyst for building the relationships that will help food businesses succeed
 - c. During the off-season between the 2016 and 2017 Mobile Market seasons, we decided to update our Mobile Market vehicle. We worked with a group of Industrial Design students from James Madison University redesign the vehicle. With a specialized vehicle, the Mobile Market is able to visit more neighborhoods in less time, drastically cutting down on set up and break down time as well as the physical exertion of the staff. Our first 2 years on the road with an old vehicle allowed us to cheaply test our model and business relationships. By the end of our second season (2016), we knew what infrastructure changes and process flow changes we needed to make to improve our efficiency. While it was hard to have a less-than-ideal vehicle at first, it was good to start cheaply and refine the program before investing a lot in equipment.
 - d. Organization and inventory at the Food Hub is key. With multiple staff members using the space for projects (FarmShare, Mobile Market), we occasionally ended up with excess product that could have been better utilized. Moving forward, that will be the responsibility of one person.
- 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:
 - a. Maintain strong relationships with growers and producers. Pay on time, be flexible, and stay organized. Building this trust will go a long way toward offering customers the best possible product, as well as keeping farmers engaged.
 - b. Take the time pre-season to plan for everything possible. Create a marketing plan, set a timeline for tasks, talk to producers, and think of anything that might come up. The more you can plan ahead of time, the better off you'll be in the busy season.
 - c. Plan for growth ahead of time. Our original walk-in was large enough for our first two seasons, but with the addition of the FarmShare and growth of Mobile Market, we have had to expand our walk in and alter our footprint in our location. Think critically about where you'd like to be and, if possible, set it up like that up front. The costs will be higher to retrofit than set up properly the first time.
 - d. Don't re-create the wheel. If there are organizations that are doing similar programs or have similar infrastructure needs, work together instead of in

opposition. The Mobile Market, Kitchen and Food Hub have helped other organizations meet their missions and improve their programs because we worked together toward the joint vision.

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.
 - a. The infrastructure created during the grant period will allow us to continue and expand operations of the Food Hub: FarmShare will increase the number of farmers and consumers participating in 2018. The Mobile Market will visit new neighborhoods and open sales to new customers in low-access areas. This will help retain 3 jobs (Food Hub coordinator, Mobile Market Manager, and Food Hub assistant)
 - b. The Kitchen will serve as host to 40 or more community events in 2018, providing cooking education, food business education, hands on activities, and community building. The Kitchen will also continue to incubate new businesses to sell at local markets and encourage them to utilize local ingredients in their products. This will help retain 1 job (Kitchen Manager)
 - c. The Food Hub will pursue opportunities to aggregate local food for institutional buying in the coming years. Expanding the hub to additional wholesale accounts (schools, restaurants, hospitals) will open new and expand existing markets for local food.
- 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?
 - a. The initial work to start to plan regionally includes the 2016 "Roanoke Local Food and Agriculture Report" and subsequent 2017 "Farmer Listening Sessions." These reports and additional information is here (www.leapforlocalfood.org/blueridge/). The top three needs/topic areas to further work on include consumer education/marketing, infrastructure (particularly expanded food hub), and cooperative buying/purchasing/support between farmers. We have started to convene "Action Teams" around the three main need areas identified through the Farmer Listening process. However, without an organized, committed and focused regional approach to food system planning, this work will likely be piecemeal. In partnership with the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission, the action teams, and other key stakeholders, we are discussing the next steps to create and fund a regional food system plan that will help inform and guide infrastructure, market, policy, and education decisions for organizations, cities, counties, and regional collectives.