

**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:	Cole Bitzenburg
Authorized Representative Phone:	360-588-5728
Authorized Representative Email:	coleb@communityactionskagit.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Community Action of Skagit County
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Skagit Bounty: Prosperous Farms, Vibrant Health
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-WA-0173
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Mount Vernon/WA
Total Awarded Budget:	\$25,000

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

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

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: Convene 4 facilitated business planning sessions with a minimum of 25 food sector stakeholders within the first 5 months of the project. Stakeholders will be asked to weigh in on ways to improve the utilization of the FDC’s resources to: 1) increase access and consumption of local produce by low income consumers and 2) increase access to markets, storage and distribution for local farmers.**
 - a. Progress Made: **4 facilitated business planning sessions were held in January and February 2015.**
 - b. Impact on Community: **Thirty-six participants attended these sessions facilitated by the Economic Development Association of Skagit County. They had the opportunity to learn about Food Distribution Center operations and its work with local farmers. By working through creating a business plan for the Skagit Food Distribution Center, stakeholders generated a variety of ideas to improve the utilization of the FDC’s resources to 1) increase access and consumption of local produce by low income consumers and 2) increase access to markets, storage and distribution for local farmers. The draft business plan reflects these ideas and the final business plan will guide the operations of the FDC and impact how our resources are utilized by the community in the future.**
 - ii. **Goal/Objective 2: Engage a minimum of 10 key stakeholders to participate in feasibility study interviews by May, 2015. Key stakeholders will be asked to review mock marketing materials to determine if they would be likely to utilize and/or support the new services offered through the FDC’s business plan.**
 - a. Progress Made: **Thirteen participants were engaged in feasibility study interviews facilitated by the Economic Development Association of Skagit County. Three participants were farmers, seven were low-income consumers, and 3 were food bank directors.**
 - b. Impact on Community: **Stakeholders reviewed mock-marketing materials and provided responses to those materials. These comments were collected and utilized in the final draft of the business plan. Those comments highlighted areas of service that the Skagit Food Distribution Center could engage in to best meet the needs of farmers, food banks, and low-income consumers.**
 - iii. **Goal/Objective 3: Create a final business plan by June, 2015 incorporating stakeholder feedback and ideas expressed during the business planning sessions and feasibility study interviews.**
 - a. Progress Made: **Food Distribution Business plan has been created.**
 - b. Impact on Community: **Pilot projects have been started to test the viability of cross-docking and cold storage rental to increase farm access to infrastructure heavy business enhancements.**
 - iv. **Goal/Objective 4: Employ methods to disseminate information about the project to a minimum of 90 people by September, 2015.**
 - a. Progress Made: **We disseminated updated information to the Community Action of Skagit County Board of Directors (35 members) once monthly. We**

also informed attendees at 18 different events/coalitions meetings reaching over 100 people. Additionally we had 2 radio spots on KSVR and 2 articles in the Skagit Valley Herald; these reached an unknown number of people. We have also maintained regular updates on the Community Action of Skagit County website.

b. Impact on Community: We were contacted by 7 community members to find out if our facility would be available for their cold storage/cross-docking needs. These needs were not known to FDC staff prior to the start of the grant. They are now being piloted as part of the business plan.

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. **Not Applicable to Planning Grant**

- i. Number of direct jobs created:
- ii. Number of jobs retained:
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created:
- iv. Number of markets expanded:
- v. Number of new markets established:
- vi. Market sales increased by \$insert dollars and increased by insert percentage%.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:
 - 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?
Not Applicable to Planning Grant

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners? **Economic Development Association of Skagit County (EDASC), local farmers, Feeding Washington, Skagit Gleaners, dandelion.systems, Volunteers of America Western Washington, Samish Island Acres Community Garden, Helping Hands Food Bank, Neighbors in Need Food Bank, VIVA Farms, Shepherd's Heart Food Bank, Northwest Ag Business Center, Agua Verde Restaurant, La Conner Sunrise Food Bank, Skagit County, United Way of Skagit County, Hamilton Community Food Bank, Cascadian Farm, Bellingham Food Bank, North Coast Credit Union, Washington State University, Sedro-Woolley City Council, North Cascades Institute, North Sound Medical Information Network.**
- ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project? **Economic Development Association of Skagit County (EDASC) led the business planning sessions, local farmers, Feeding Washington, Skagit Gleaners, dandelion.systems, Volunteers of America Western Washington, Samish Island Acres Community Garden, Helping Hands Food Bank, Neighbors in Need Food Bank, VIVA Farms, Shepherd's Heart Food Bank, Northwest Ag Business Center, Agua Verde Restaurant, La Conner Sunrise Food Bank, Skagit County, United Way of Skagit County, Hamilton Community Food Bank, Cascadian Farm, Bellingham Food Bank, North Coast Credit Union, Washington State University, Sedro-Woolley City Council, North Cascades Institute, North Sound Medical Information Network all contributed to the business plan development. EDASC facilitated the feasibility studies and La Conner Sunrise Food Bank, Shepherd's Heart**

Food Bank, and Neighbors in Need Food Bank, local farmers contributed input to feasibility studies.

- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant? **EDASC will continue to provide input when needed to implement pieces of the business plan. Local farms and food banks are participating in further pilot projects to test the viability of implementing select pieces of the business plan.**

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 contracted with the Economic Development Association of Skagit County (EDASC). James McCafferty, a business advisor with EDASC, facilitated four stakeholder led business planning sessions. He wrote up notes from each session and created a business plan for the Skagit Food Distribution Center. The business plan includes a narrative section and a financial build. He also facilitated the feasibility studies to test the viability of business plan pieces. He wrote up notes from the feasibility studies and created a summary of findings.**

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

 - i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? **Community Action of Skagit County website, Community Action of Skagit County Board of Directors Report packet and participants in the stakeholder and feasibility studies.**
 - ii. To whom did you publicize the results? **Community Action Board of Directors, Public via website, and participants in the stakeholder and feasibility studies.**
 - iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? **36 total stakeholders attended our business planning sessions and 35 board members received our results additionally 7 new stakeholders via our feasibility studies.**

*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? **46 evaluations were completed from 4 business planning sessions to determine satisfaction with the process. Participants could respond to evaluation prompts using one of 5 possible answers: Yes absolutely, Well kind of, Not really, Absolutely NOT, and This doesn't apply to me. 13 evaluations were completed from feasibility studies to determine satisfaction with the process. Participants could respond to evaluation prompts using one of 5 possible answers: Yes absolutely, Well kind of, Not really, Absolutely NOT, and This doesn't apply to me.**
 - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? **Business Planning Sessions: The answers to selected prompts are given as percentages: *The information was relevant and meaningful*: 59% Yes absolutely, 37% Well kind of, and 5% Not really. *I felt comfortable sharing my thoughts with the group*: 87% Yes absolutely, 13% Well kind of. *I felt like a respected and valued member of the group*: 92% Yes absolutely, 7% Well kind of, and 3% Not really. Comments from the evaluation of the business planning sessions included:**
 - **Would have liked better customer definitions, stories, evaluate competition.**

- Some networking or meet and greet time if possible often a super valuable part of getting people together.
- The final plan make available to participants.
- Needed more time to review draft.
- Greater recognition of whether the benefit to hunger relief is purely financial or is it in terms of products. Are we asking farms to use our services for their profit or ours?
- Good interaction, important to have time to speak and educational.
- Challenging...more open discussion vs. individually answering questions. What do stakeholders need to be more successful at what they do?

Evaluations were reviewed after each business session. In response to comments, presentation methods were adjusted in the following sessions.

Feasibility Studies: The answers to selected prompts are given as percentages: *Overall, this feasibility study interview process was enjoyable: 100% Yes absolutely. The information was relevant and meaningful: 92% Yes absolutely, 8% Well kind of. I felt comfortable sharing my thoughts: 100% Yes absolutely. I felt like a respected and valued member of the process: 100% Yes absolutely. I have an increased knowledge of a method to fund non-profit operations through revenue generation: 38% Yes absolutely, 62% Well kind of. The meeting location was convenient and comfortable: 100% Yes absolutely. The meeting day and time worked for my schedule: 92% Yes absolutely, 8% Well kind of. What could have been done to improve the feasibility study interview experience? –Attendance of more community members. –It was very informative and enjoyable. Thanks You. –Future meeting after starting of program.- A Fan.*

8. Budget Summary:

- 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: **This form was submitted separately on 30 November 2015 by Community Action of Skagit County Finance Director**
- Did the project generate any income? **No**
 - If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

9. Lessons Learned:

- Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed). **The greatest lesson learned was that community members can provide fantastic insight on how to utilize available resources. Additionally we learned that community members are very willing to provide insight and participate in a process with hopes to create a stronger food system both economically and equitably. We did learn that getting a large showing of stakeholders can be very difficult. Often time it is difficult to find meeting times and places that work well for the community partners that are needed at the table for their input. Partnering with community members and agencies do a great job of spreading the burden of resources; this was especially pronounced in a positive way**

with our contracted work with the Economic Development Association of Skagit County. Additionally we were able to leverage our connections with local agencies to draw in more community involvement.

- 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: **Partnering with an experienced agency can ease the challenge of a project in an unfamiliar area. As a non-profit serving predominantly low-income individuals and families our bailiwick was not economic development or business plan development. The ability to partner with experts in those areas facilitated the quick and successful completion of the grant.**

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. **The work of this project will continue through the leveraging of our infrastructure and community resources to implement segments of the business plan. Currently we are undertaking pilot projects that are testing our ability to rent cold-storage space to small farms in the region. This will provide a modest level of income to the Skagit Food Distribution Center (SFDC) in order to offset some of the operational costs allowing Community Action of Skagit County to continue working to alleviate food access issues in the region. Additionally the low-cost cold storage will allow local farms to leverage and access value-added markets and retain/secure a greater customer base. This could allow more farmers to continue farming and provide a positive economic impact for the region. The SFDC is also undertaking a pilot project for cross-docking (utilizing dock infrastructure to transfer goods from larger to smaller trucks or vice-versa). This service could provide revenue generation to offset operational costs for the SFDC. Additionally this could provide increased business access to farms and other businesses in the region increasing their economic viability and retaining a vibrant region with more sustained employment. We estimate that our cold storage and cross-docking services will provide increased market access/economic viability for 5-10 local farms/businesses. At this time an accurate estimate of increased revenue generation for both the SFDC and local farms/businesses is not available. Based upon the pilot projects for cold storage rental and cross docking we project a potential revenue generation for the SFDC of ~\$15-20 per cross dock and ~\$30 per month per entity per pallet of good stored. As this project has not yet been implemented in a non-pilot capacity actual revenue generation is not available. Additionally the increased economic impact for farms/business is not yet available. Please feel free to contact the Authorized Representative in the future to follow up on actual impact upon implementation of the non-pilot phase in 2016.**
- ii. Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals? **The Skagit Food Distribution Center (SFDC) intends to continue to evaluate pieces of the business plan**

for potential implementation. Next steps would include following the business plan and utilizing it to evaluate potential business ventures for benefit to farms/businesses, the SFDC, and the community at large.