

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>	9/30/2014 – 9/30/2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Jenny Thacker
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Recipient Organization Name:	Seattle Tilth Association (now dba Tilth Alliance)
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Seattle Tilth Produce – Connecting Small Farmers to Markets in the Puget Sound
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-WA-0176
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Washington State
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: STP expands to support the growth of farmers in Seattle Tilth programs

- Progress Made: 26 new farmers have completed Seattle Tilth’s Organic Farmer Education Program during the grant period, with an additional 12 set to begin the program in 2017. Seattle Tilth Produce (STP) food hub staff have held multiple trainings with new farmers on food hub operations, marketing, and distribution support.

STP’s CSA (community supported agriculture) program grew to 460 shares in 2016 (up from 296 in 2015), providing approximately \$30,000 more in revenue to STFW participants in 2016 than 2015

- Impact on Community: Four of our 2015 participants began transitioning to markets outside of STP, and two were able to procure their own land. One has purchased ten acres and has invited a number of Seattle Tilth Farm Works participants to join her on her farm, freeing up additional space at our farm, Red Barn Ranch, for new participants. These farmers plan to sell to STP’s CSA and Good Food Bag programs in 2017. As a result, we expect to have 15 acres in cultivation in 2017 compared to 8.5 acres in 2016.

ii. Goal/Objective 2: Seattle Tilth Produce expands to support more farmers outside of Seattle Tilth programs

- Progress Made: In 2016, having expanded the CSA by 54% (from 298 to 460 shares), we began purchasing more produce from farmers outside Tilth programs. In the final analysis of 2016, 55% of purchases (in dollars) came from external producers. This was due in part to a late start at STFW’s farm in Auburn, as well as significant staff turnover which affected our crop planning process. In addition, our own farm at Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands was under construction this year, necessitating increased purchases from farmers outside Seattle Tilth. Looking ahead at 2017, 44 acres of additional farmland is being negotiated with King County Land Access partners to support beginner farmers in scaling up and generating additional produce for the local area hubs and markets.
- Impact on Community: Some farmers are now using the Seattle Tilth Produce markets (primarily the CSA) to grow more, or produce the right crops, taking advantage of the valuable pre-season planning process. We also foresee even more opportunities to buy from and support “external” farmers during the season as we work through each week of our CSA and Good Food Bags, actual crop availability, etc. In total in 2016, STP purchased approximately \$130,000 from farmers outside the Seattle Tilth programs.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Increase STP’s customer base by 300% to 400 CSA customers and 20 institutional customers by September 2016.

- Progress Made: Seattle Tilth is now the anchor tenant and activator for the Rainier Beach Food and Farm Hub in Seattle’s Rainier Beach neighborhood, an

incubator space for food innovation businesses. We have built out a large 264 square ft. cold storage walk in refrigerator space, own a single refrigerated sprinter van and also rent a refrigerated box truck during the agricultural season.

We were serving 460 families with our CSA and delivered 6,000 Good Food Bags to limited-income families in 2016. We have also finalized an agreement with the City of Seattle to provide an additional 10,000 Good Food Bags to families enrolled in the City's Seattle Preschool Pilot Program in 2017. This program will expand the Good Food Bag program by up to 26 sites, all of which are preschools serving limited resource families.

We also sold a significant amount of produce to the Rainier Valley Food Bank in 2016 and expect to expand this relationship as our Rainier Beach Urban Farm reopens after construction in March of 2017. We also developed some institutional customers in the Northwest School, the United Indians of All Tribes Labateyah Youth Home, the Yesler Terrace Community Center, and other clients of the City of Seattle's Farm to Table program. Beyond this, however, institutional relationships remain a challenge for us. We have taken part in King County's Local Institutional Food Team project along with the Northwest Agricultural Business Center, the Puget Sound Food Hub, and the Washington State Department of Agriculture. The farmers we work with are all very small, however, and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification is difficult for them to attain. As GAP certification is required by most institutional customers, we and our partners are not yet well positioned to cater to these markets, with the notable exception of the Seattle Preschool Pilot Program.

- **Impact on Community:** A new food hub project in a largely underserved neighborhood will bring economic activity, and increase local access to good food, and has lots of potential for growth and partnerships. The expansion of the CSA has reached an even broader customer base. Our CSA tends to reach new customers that haven't participated in CSAs in the past, increasing the local food market in Seattle. We've also seen an increase in CSA membership in more diverse or underserved neighborhoods in Seattle, along with a doubling of members paying with EBT/SNAP. An end of season comment from one of our CSA members who was paying with EBT/SNAP shared "I would not have had such excellent access to quality produce if it weren't for your program. All my shopping is typically done at WinCo and Grocery Outlet because of my budget, so I was extremely grateful for this opportunity. As a volunteer and Early Bird registrant, the discounts were a HUGE help!! Thank you to all the amazing farmers, staff, and volunteers for making this happen."

We also sold or donated over 8,000 lbs. of produce to local food banks and provided approximately 25,000 lbs. of produce to low-income families at a 50% discounted rate through our Good Food Bag program.

- iv. Goal/Objective 4: Access to locally produced, healthy food is increased in King County's low-income communities.

- Progress Made: At least 15 new partnerships have been forged with Good Food Bag distribution sites, and we are in discussion with the City of Seattle to expand to up to 26 additional sites.
- Impact on Community: We've increased our annual distribution of Good Food Bags by 90%, from 3,100 in 2014 to 5,901 in 2016, and are poised to expand with other CBO (community based organization) partnerships for distribution in the coming months, which has been a big demand and need from the community since the program began. Findings from an evaluation conducted in January 2016 included high member satisfaction, with 93% of our members reporting a difference in their diet because of the GFB program. Some positive comments from our Good Food Bag members from the evaluation include:
 - "I'm really appreciative of the program. I'm really glad you told me about it because, otherwise we wouldn't eat as much as we do, we just can't afford to."
 - "[without GFB] It wouldn't be on the table as much. My refrigerator's overflowing, my kitchen's overflowing...it changed my house."
 - "I've always been a vegetable eater, but it [GFB] is promoting me to buy more vegetables at the store....it brought back the habit."

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.

- i. Number of direct jobs created: 1
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 2
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 20 new farmers between STFW's 2015 and 2016 cohorts.
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 1. We tripled the reach of our CSA from 150 members in 2014 to 460 members in 2016, added a 120 member Fall CSA share, and are on track to expand the Good Food Bag program by 200% in 2017.
- v. Number of new markets established: 46 new markets established including: 19 restaurant, grocery, and institutional accounts, 25 new Good Food Bag distribution sites and two farmers markets. We plan to expand to an additional 15-20 Good Food Bag distribution sites in 2017.
- vi. Market sales increased by: Market sales increased by \$171,694.29 from the season prior to receiving/implementing the LFPP grant funding (comparing 2014 total sales to 2016 total sales), which is a 117% increase.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 59 total farmers that have benefited, an increase of 37 farmers from the beginning of the grant period (we were working with 22 farmers total when the grant period started)
 - Percent Increase: 168%

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?

We've doubled our number of customers who are paying with EBT/SNAP and hope to keep growing that segment of our market through a partnership with FINI (Food Insecurity Nutrition

Incentive grant program through USDA). We've also doubled the number of distribution sites for our CSA, many through local businesses.

Our Good Food Bag distribution sites have also increased, expanding the number of weekly bags and communities we're able to serve. Our Good Food Bag members (who are all low income/low access) now represent a wider array of demographics than when the grant period started, including new ethnic groups, new age groups, and a new community partnership model (distributing at health clinics and housing centers).

In 2017 our STFW farmers will be participating in an international farmers market, serving and making available certified Organic produce to a more diverse demographic and are working closely with South King County Food Coalition, which is comprised of 12 food banks serving the most diverse community in the county.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners? Some partners include the City of Seattle, King Conservation District, Seattle Indian Health Board, Homegrown Sandwiches, Eat Local, Local Food Marketplace, Starbucks, United Way of King County, Stockbox Grocery, Cupcake Royale, Portage Bay Grange, King County Housing Authority, City of Auburn and Washington Community Action Network.
- ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project? Many are either Good Food Bag or CSA pick-up locations.
- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant? Our partners have helped develop our Good Food Bag program across new communities, promote the CSA to EBT/SNAP customers and facilitate CSA distribution and sales for our farmers.

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

We hired two independent consultants to conduct the needs assessment survey. Both of these contractors brought expertise in surveying local farmers for food hub development. They were instrumental in reviewing survey drafts, advising on implementation, and in helping us as we interpreted the results.

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

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? A blogpost outlined new and returning farmers at the STFW incubator, along with Seattle Tilth Produce's expansion. The post can be read at: <http://seattletilthblog.org/2015/04/09/welcome-new-farmers/>
A new webpage describes all our producers, including "external" farmers producing for the Seattle Tilth CSA.
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results? Seattle Tilth community
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? Approximately 10,921 people.

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? We collect twice-yearly surveys of both our CSA and Good Food Bag customers, and have twice per season all-farmer round table talks with our STFW program participants. From informal conversations and interactions, we know that the external farmers who participated in the farm planning sessions appreciated understanding what types and variety of produce we would be happy to buy from them during the growing season, and that farmers from our programs have been pleased with our efforts to market and buy their products.
- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? We received 27 survey responses to our Seattle Tilth Produce Needs Assessment, and the results support further development of a seasonal Seattle Tilth food hub located in south Seattle serving small-scale farmers. The majority of the farmers we support are growing on 5 acres or less, and for 69% of the respondents, their farming income represents just –25% of their total household income. 13 of the 20 farmers cited a need for market facilitation, 10 cited a need for brand development, and 9 cited lack of transportation and cold storage infrastructure as the most limited their ability to achieve marketing success. Over half of the respondents cited a strong interest in basic food hub services such as marketing and sales support to retail and wholesale customers. The same number of respondents cited moderate interest in shared aggregation, distribution, accounting which reveals an opportunity to educate farmers on why these offerings would be of value to their customers by giving farmers a competitive advantage in the market. This indicates that further food hub development could be a very beneficial support for these small-scale farmers.

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? Yes.
 - If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

The Seattle Tilth Produce food hub project generated \$585,083.47 total during the project period. All of that income went back into the project to pay for Cost of Goods Sold, salaries for project staff, utilities, and other administrative costs.

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). We learned that coordinated crop planning supports farm businesses. There are viable markets for farmers serving limited resource communities with community support. We also learned that it truly takes time to develop this type of program to the point where our sales can support our staff time. We have also experienced a few staff turnovers and realized how valuable the

institutional knowledge that each staff members holds is, and how critical it is to find the best ways to transfer this institutional knowledge to new staff.

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: NA
- 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: We have struggled somewhat with the databases that we purchased and set up a few years ago, realizing that they are not a perfect fit for the work that we are trying to do, and in fact have caused significant increases in staff time to create workarounds to make them do what we need them to do.

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 Good Food Bag program is going to increase in the 2017 season, likely by 200% or more. We aim to continue our crop planning process with both our farmers and our customers, for best outcomes and outreach to increase this program for the wider community in need of increased access to fresh organic produce. Presenting the growth and subsequent impact on the community of the GFB program and corresponding initiative/success to grow and support farmers will be a model in food access distribution that will continue to be replicated in our marketing and outreach strategies. The 2017 GFB program will create a half time permanent position within the organization.
- 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? Next steps will be to successfully execute the production and delivery of the increased GFB program, outreach into the community and with partners to invest and promote the GFB program. We would also like to have an on-farm GFB event to bring recipients of the produce closer to the production, and engage in developing a better understanding of the food system.