

FY 2012

University of the District of Columbia

\$73,500 to University of the District of Columbia, Washington, DC, to establish two new farmers markets in a low-income neighborhood of Washington, DC, and provide transportation options for seniors.

Final Report

**Farmers Market Promotion Program
Final Performance Report
For the Period of September 24, 2012-February 28, 2015**

Date: June 28, 2015

Recipient Name: University of the District of Columbia, College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability, and Environmental Sciences (UDC-CAUSES)

Project Title: Establishing an Oasis in Two NE Food Deserts

Grant Number: 12-25-G-1543 or CFDA Number 10.168

Project Location: Washington, DC

Amount Awarded: \$73,500

Contact: Dwane Jones/202-274-7182/dwane.jones@udc.edu

Goals and Objectives: To establish two new farmers markets in a low-income neighborhood of Washington, DC, and provide transportation options for seniors.

Activities +Accomplishments + Beneficiaries:

UDC CAUSES contracted with Arcadia's Mobile Market to establish and operate two new markets in Washington, DC at the following locations:

- St. Elizabeth's/Gateway Pavilion
2700 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20032
Ward 8

- Providence Hospital
1150 Varnum Street NE
Washington, DC 20017
Ward 5

UDC CAUSES also:

- Hired market support staff (students) to assist in market operations and marketing.
- Provided training for market support staff.
- Advertised to targeted groups using flyers, social media, and word of mouth weekly between April to November 2014-grant ending period.
- Recorded sales and measurements.

By developing this market access through a partnership with Arcadia's Mobile Market, UDC is providing food access to underserved communities, particularly senior citizens most at risk, and planting the seeds for a viable farmers market in the future.

The power of subsidized retail sales over free distribution is clear: customers select what appeals to them rather than accept what is being handed out, and they invest their own often meager resources in healthy food, which increases the likelihood they will consume the food. The subsidies ensure that the food is as fresh and as high-quality as any other farmers market in the city but more affordable, and it is sold with excellent customer service that ensures an empowering and satisfactory experience. That increases the likelihood of return customers. In September alone at the UDC stops more than 44 percent of transactions with verified low-income patrons were repeat customers.

Customers shopping at these two Mobile Market stops between May and November spent \$10,605.31 on healthy, fresh locally grown foods that would not otherwise be available to them. Forty-six percent of that total involved customers with verified low incomes – those qualified for Medicaid, SNAP, WIC, or Senior Farmers Markets Nutrition Vouchers, an incredibly high percentage for a farmers market in Washington, D.C. EBT sales alone were 22 times the average monthly EBT total at Mid-Atlantic farmers markets, based on USDA data.

Our experience and sales numbers from both market stops indicate a high interest among low-income customers for high-quality seasonal food but limited means and retail opportunities to obtain it. Building the market stops toward long-term viability will require at least another season and adjustments by on-site partners, which are critical to building sufficient demand for the food as well as developing habitual customers. However, based on three years of market data and applying best practices, both stops could be projected to increase in sales by at least 50 percent next year, and could double their first year sales by year three.

This report captures data for September sales and will serve as a final report on the partnership between UDC Causes and Arcadia.

Background

The Arcadia Market accepts all forms of payments, including SNAP benefits (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), WIC vouchers (Women, Infant and Children), and Senior FMNP vouchers (Farmers' Market Nutrition Program). The Market will also accept the new Senior Voucher that will be available through D.C. DOH.

In order to attract customers who receive food assistance benefits, the Market offers an independently funded "Bonus Bucks" program. "Bonus Bucks" double the purchasing power of SNAP, WIC, and Senior FMNP vouchers dollar-for-dollar for the first \$10 spent on fruits and vegetables, and healthy proteins. For example, \$10 spent with SNAP on fruits and vegetables yields \$20 worth of produce for the beneficiary. This matching program is supported through by Power Supply DC and Wholesome Wave. Roughly 50 percent of overall Mobile Market transactions this season involve customers using federal nutrition benefits.

The Mobile Market also accepts D.C. Produce Plus checks, a DOH-program that makes \$10 vouchers for fresh produce available at no-charge to qualifying low-income customers.

Arcadia also participates in a Fruit and Vegetable Prescription program funded by outside parties. That program gives vouchers for fruits and vegetables for patients enrolled in the

program and redeemable at Arcadia market.

Market staff also provides SNAP eligibility pre-screening and assistance finding affordable food elsewhere in the National Capital Region. Arcadia is distributing a free cookbook directed at low-income customers that will provide recipes and nutrition information that matches WIC staple foods and budgets with seasonally available ingredients.

In January, UDC selected St. Elizabeth's Gateway Pavilion (Ward 8) and Providence Hospital (Ward 5) as locations for the two additional Mobile Market stops this season under its sponsorship. Both are located in USDA food deserts in predominantly low-income areas. Both are first-time locations for the Arcadia Mobile Market. Outside of the grant responsibilities, Arcadia makes an additional once monthly market stop at St. Elizabeth's Gateway, serving the same population and promoting the weekly UDC-sponsored market stops.

May-June 2014

LOW-INCOME FOOD ACCESS

ST ELIZABETH'S

REPORTING PERIOD: May 1 – June 26, 2014

Total Market Stops: 8

May: 5/1, 5/8, 5/15, 5/22

June: 6/5, 6/12, 6/19, 6/26

TOTAL: \$1,454.39 from May 1 through June 26.

Low-Income Impact: 55 percent of our sales over this period (\$814) were conducted with verified low-income customers using city and federal nutrition benefits and matching dollars, AKA "Bonus Bucks." Our base EBT sales for this period (\$354) account for 24 percent of total sales, an extremely high percentage of food stamp sales for any farmers market. The St. Elizabeth's average monthly total is quadruple the average monthly market sales generated by EBT sales at farmers markets in the Mid-Atlantic (\$42 each month) according to USDA data.¹

EBT: \$354

INCENTIVES: \$330

PRODUCE PLUS: \$55

WIC FMNP: \$10

PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL

REPORTING PERIOD: May 2 – June 27, 2014

Total Market Stops: 9

May: 5/2, 5/9, 5/16, 5/23, 5/30

June: 6/6, 6/13, 6/20, 6/27

TOTAL: \$2,188.91 from May 1 through June 27.

Low-Income Food Access 20.5 percent of our sales over this period (\$449.17) were conducted with verified low-income customers using city and federal nutrition benefits and matching

¹ "USDA National Farmers Market Manager Survey 2006"

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5077203>

dollars, AKA “Bonus Bucks.” Our base EBT sales for this period (\$121.21) account for five percent of total sales.

EBT: \$121.21

INCENTIVES: \$136.96

PRODUCE PLUS: \$15

WIC FMNP: \$20

WIC CVV: \$10

VEGGIE Rx: \$51

July 2014

LOW-INCOME FOOD ACCESS

ST ELIZABETH’S

REPORTING PERIOD: July 3 – July 31, 2014

Total Market Stops: 6

7/3, 7/5, 7/10, 7/17/, 7/24, 7/31

TOTAL: \$1,337.61

Low-Income Impact: 52.8 percent of UDC-Mobile Market sales over this period (\$707.44) were conducted with verified low-income customers using city and federal nutrition benefits and matching dollars, AKA “Bonus Bucks.” DC-funded Produce Plus checks accounted for nearly 25 percent of sales, a strong indication that the program is effective in getting low-income populations access to healthy foods. Senior FMNP checks – worth \$5 each for a total of \$25 for the season – totaled \$70, with 11 seniors visiting the stop. 8 of those seniors visited the Mobile Market for the first time in July. Base EBT sales for this period (\$105.44) account for approximately 8 percent of total sales, more than double the average monthly market sales generated by EBT sales at farmers markets in the Mid-Atlantic (\$42 each month) according to USDA data.²

EBT: \$105.44

INCENTIVES: \$187.82

PRODUCE PLUS: \$310

SENIOR FMNP: \$70

WIC FMNP: \$35

PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL

REPORTING PERIOD: July 4 – July 25, 2014

Total Market Stops: 3 (no stop on a federal holiday)

7/11, 7/18, 7/25

TOTAL: \$1,062.46 from July 11 – July 27

Low-Income Food Access 29 percent of UDC Mobile Market sales over this period (\$315.34) were conducted with verified low-income customers using city and federal nutrition benefits and matching dollars, AKA “Bonus Bucks.” Base EBT sales for this period (\$30.17) account for just 2.8 percent of total sales, but all of the customers were new users of EBT at the Mobile Market,

² “USDA National Farmers Market Manager Survey 2006”

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5077203>

evidence that the UDC stop is increasing access to healthy food for SNAP customers. WIC and Senior sales were stronger, at \$75 and \$50, respectively, with five senior transactions, three of them visiting the Mobile Market for the first time.

EBT: \$30.17

INCENTIVES: \$155.17

PRODUCE PLUS: \$5

WIC FMNP: \$75

SENIOR FMNP: \$50

August 2014

LOW-INCOME FOOD ACCESS

ST ELIZABETH'S

REPORTING PERIOD: August 2 – August 28, 2014

Total Market Stops: 5

8/2, 8/7, 8/14, 8/21, 8/28

TOTAL: \$1,418.75

Low-Income Impact: 58.7 percent of UDC-Mobile Market sales over this period (\$833.30) were conducted with verified low-income customers using city and federal nutrition benefits and matching dollars, AKA “Bonus Bucks.” DC-funded Produce Plus checks accounted for almost 30 percent of sales, a strong indication that the program is effective in getting low-income populations access to healthy foods. Senior FMNP checks – worth \$5 each for a total of \$25 for the season – totaled \$160, more than double the amount in July, with 17 seniors visiting the stop, 11 of those seniors visiting the Mobile Market for the first time in August. Base EBT sales for this period (\$90.20) account for approximately 6 percent of total sales, more than double the average monthly market sales generated by EBT sales at farmers markets in the Mid-Atlantic (\$42 each month) according to USDA data.³

EBT: \$90.20

INCENTIVES: \$228.30

PRODUCE PLUS: \$420

SENIOR FMNP: \$160

WIC FMNP: \$25

PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL

REPORTING PERIOD: August 4 – August 29, 2014

Total Market Stops: 5

8/1, 8/8, 8/15, 8/22, 8/29

TOTAL: \$1,068.31 from July 11 – July 27

Low-Income Food Access 36 percent of UDC Mobile Market sales over this period (\$387.64) were conducted with verified low-income customers using city and federal nutrition benefits and matching dollars, AKA “Bonus Bucks.” Base EBT sales for this period (\$61.57) account for 5.7 percent of total sales, but the majority of the customers were new users of EBT at the Mobile

³ “USDA National Farmers Market Manager Survey 2006”

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5077203>

Market, evidence that the UDC stop is increasing access to healthy food for SNAP customers. WIC and Senior sales were stronger, at \$70 and \$55, respectively, with 8 senior transactions, five of them visiting the Mobile Market for the first time.

EBT: \$61.57

INCENTIVES: \$181.07

PRODUCE PLUS: \$20 (the number is low because there is no PPP distributor at this site)

WIC FMNP: \$70

SENIOR FMNP: \$55

September-November 2014

LOW-INCOME FOOD ACCESS

ST ELIZABETH'S

REPORTING PERIOD: September 4 – 18, 2014

Total Market Stops: 4

TOTAL: \$684.29

Low-Income Impact: A massive 74.8 percent of UDC-Mobile Market sales over this period (\$511.66) were conducted with verified low-income customers using city and federal nutrition benefits and matching dollars, AKA “Bonus Bucks.” DC-funded Produce Plus checks accounted for almost 10 percent of total sales, lower than in previous months and attributable to the winding down of that program. Senior FMNP checks – worth \$5 each for a total of \$25 for the season – totaled \$80, about half the amount in August, with 10 seniors visiting the stop, two of them for the first time. The 80 percent return customer rate speaks to the compelling nature of the Mobile Market stops, while the lower new customer rate suggests more work is needed in outreach to senior communities. One obstacle at St. Elizabeth's is transportation -- the distance from the train and bus stops can be formidable for less mobile seniors. Base EBT sales for this period (\$96.58) account for approximately 14 percent of total sales, more than double the previous month and double the average monthly market sales generated by EBT sales at farmers markets in the Mid-Atlantic (\$42 each month) according to USDA data.⁴ WIC sales were also double the amount at this stop than in the month of August (\$50 v \$25), an increase perhaps attributable to the end of the PPP program.

EBT: \$96.58

INCENTIVES: \$220.08

PRODUCE PLUS: \$65

SENIOR FMNP: \$80

WIC FMNP: \$50

PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL

REPORTING PERIOD: November 15, 2014

Total Market Stops: 4

TOTAL: \$1,391.69

Low-Income Food Access Nearly 38 percent of UDC Mobile Market sales over this period (\$552.65) were conducted with verified low-income customers using city and federal nutrition

⁴ “USDA National Farmers Market Manager Survey 2006”

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5077203>

benefits and matching dollars, AKA “Bonus Bucks.” Base EBT sales for this period (\$134.90) account for nearly 10 percent of total sales, and once again the majority of the customers were new users of EBT at the Mobile Market, evidence that the UDC stop is increasing access to healthy food for SNAP customers. WIC and Senior sales were stronger than the previous month, at \$76 and \$60, respectively, with 9 senior transactions, five of them visiting the Mobile Market for the first time.

EBT: \$134.90

INCENTIVES: \$235.75

PRODUCE PLUS: \$45

WIC FMNP: \$76

SENIOR FMNP: \$60

Lessons Learned:

- Establishing a new market in a food desert does not always function on the principle of “build it and they will come.”
- A business environment (such as the one provided by Arcadia’s Mobile Market) could be used as a mechanism to develop a business environment to establish and operate a permanent market.
- Systemic changes require strategic partnerships + community engagement.
- Opportunity + education can be catalysts to improving food security in food deserts.
- Sometimes it’s better to take the market to seniors than it is to attempt to take seniors to the market.
- Certain policies can be barriers to efficiently and effectively carrying out certain programs.