

## **FY2014**

\$85,600 to SCF-Organics Farms, Ltd., Sumter, SC, to operate a new mobile farmers' market stand to reach USDA Strike

Force Initiative zones, food deserts, and offer Federal benefits redemption and nutrition education demos.

### **Final Report**

# **Farmers Market Promotion Program**

## **Final Performance Report**

### **For the Period of September 30, 2014 – September 30, 2015**

**Date:** October 23, 2015 - updated for March 21, 2016  
**Recipient Name:** SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd.  
**Project Title:** Midlands Organic Mobile Market 2.0, Expanding Into Food Deserts Project  
**Grant Number:** 14-FMPPX-0153  
**Project Location:** Sumter, SC  
**Amount Awarded:** \$85,600  
**Contact:** Fathiyyah Mustafa (803) 469-0116 [azeezmustafa@yahoo.com](mailto:azeezmustafa@yahoo.com)

#### **Goals and Objectives:**

**Goal:** More efficient distribution to increase access to organic produce in food deserts, and more equitable payment systems to increase affordability of organic produce to low-income residents of food deserts in the Midlands region (state capital) and surrounding counties of South Carolina.

**Objective:** Establish Midlands Organics Mobile Farmers' Market as the primary source of organic foods serving access points hosted by community partners at schools, parks, hospitals, churches, and food banks/pantries in food deserts in Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Sumter and Richland Counties.

**Need:** With poverty rates of 30%, 16%, 17.4%, 29.8% and 23.4% respectively (US Census), Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Columbia and Sumter each have numerous food-insecure neighborhoods. Their main USDA-mapped food deserts are concentrated in the urban areas, with a large strip of rural food desert located on the main route between the cities of Sumter and Columbia, a route that SCF uses several times weekly to transport its produce to markets. Food deserts in downtown Columbia reach as much as 38.8% of residents having a combination of low access/low income (USDA Food Locator, 2014). Midlands Organics is based in Sumter and serves those and other food-insecure neighborhoods in the region. Food access challenges in central South Carolina are clear illustrations of the poverty and lack of distribution systems, even amidst a highly productive agricultural landscape where most of the produce is commodity crops such as (soybeans, wheat, corn, cotton) grown for export and shipped out of the region.

**Project Background and purpose:** Midlands Organic Mobile Market 2.0, Expanding into Food Deserts Project was developed by SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd (SCF) to be the primary source for direct-to-consumer distribution of organic local foods in the Midlands (state capital) and surrounding regions of South Carolina. SCF, a growing cooperative of African-American farmers, is the largest certified organic agricultural producers' cooperative supplies fresh organic produce throughout the Midlands and surrounding regions. SCF uses climate-controlled transportation to create a farmers' market stand anywhere throughout the region, offering fresh organic produce, mobile nutrition education/cooking demos, and SNAP/EBT sales hosted by partner churches, schools, parks, hospitals, and other distribution points. From its base at 320 W. Brewington Road, Sumter, SC, the Mobile Market will primarily serve low-income residents in USDA-mapped food deserts in Clarendon (30 % poverty rate), Kershaw (16.1% poverty rate), Lee (29.8% poverty rate), Sumter (19.9% poverty rate) and Richland (Columbia) (23.4% poverty rate), particularly those in low access/low income areas who are using or could be using SNAP/EBT benefits. The Mobile Market has increased and expanded SCF's presence at new access points pop up farmers markets it serves at in the state capital region and counties across the Midlands region of this state.

## Activities:

SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd has leased a 2014 Ford Transit through McLaughlin Ford Motor Inc. SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd has outfitted a Midlands Organics Mobile Market 2.0 vehicle, hired a Market Manager, Assistant Market Manager, Driver/Operator and Outreach and Marketing Consultant. SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd has purchased signs, tents, coolers, tables, shelves, etc to set-up the Midlands Organics Mobile Market 2.0. SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd has increased efficiency in miles traveled and time by SCF farmer-members by coordinating with a consultant to develop efficient schedules and routes. SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd has started five new food desert destinations to expand Midlands Organic Mobile Market 2.0. Those five new food desert destinations are Farmers Market in Kershaw County at the [Historic Camden Revolutionary War Park](#) (park), [The Cypress Center](#) (hospital) in Clarendon county, [Rafting Creek Community Center](#) in Rembert, S. C., Irmo Market [Irmo Town Park](#) (park) in Richland County, Rosewood Market in Columbia, S.C. and Community Missionary Charity Organization in Wedge Field, S.C. which is a census designated place (CDP) on the rural outskirts of Sumter County. SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd has also been able to maintain a presence at the All-local Market, Soda City Market, Forrest Acres, Kershaw County Market, USC Healthy Market, 14 Carrots Whole food, The Sand hills, South Sumter Farmers Market, Clarendon Health Systems and at SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd. Brewington location in the food deserts areas that we first started with the help of the 2012 FMPP Grant. SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd has done all the paperwork and inspection to maintain EBT/ SNAP Certification. SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd has updated its existing website ([www.scforganicfarms.com](http://www.scforganicfarms.com)) to advertise the cooperative and the Midlands Organic Mobile Market 2.0, Expanding into Food Deserts Project. Other links below are where the Midlands Organic Mobile Market has advertised and been featured

- [Clemson University Newsletter](#)
- [Irmo Facebook Page](#)
- [Yellow Pages](#)
- [EBT/ SNAP](#)
- [Palmetto Magazine feature](#)

***Project Partners Contributions and Roles*** - Project partners for this grant include Harvest Hope Food Bank, the largest food bank in central South Carolina, serving to alleviate hunger in 20 counties, with its main offices and warehouse in Columbia and serving a network of food pantries in Columbia and Sumter. The mobile market has allowed SCF to serve some of Harvest Hopes customers by using food pantries as access points for the market, and providing fresh organic produce to the food bank. In addition, SCF has provided a mobile market access point at the Youth Academy, a local residential facility for more than 100 children, teens, and young adults who are at-risk, in need of foster care. Youth Academy works with a wide range of social service agencies in the Midlands. In addition, SCF has collaborated on monitoring and evaluating project outcomes with the University of South Carolina's Arnold School of Public Health has a Prevention Research Center with projects in the Sumter area. SCF has provided mobile market access points at four additional new locations: 1) Clarendon Health System in Clarendon County, the hospital of that community; 2)South Sumter Resource Center and 3)Manning Avenue Free Art Studio (Mafs, Inc.),an educational facility and a community art studio located in CDP south Sumter, SC in a low income neighborhood in Sumter County; 4)Dianne's Call, a nonprofit organization that has provided holistic and natural life coaching and outreach programs that are helpful to the communities they serve in the Sumter area; and 5)Florence-Darlington Technical College (school).Each of these organizations are important partners between SCF and a large network of community partners who may serve as access points in and around food deserts in the region. Consultation - David Harper developed the relationships with community

partners (schools, hospitals, food banks, churches, parks) necessary to establish mobile market access points in food deserts has result in getting the message and awareness of the mobile market out to the public and coordinated with the Market Manager to ensure efficient scheduling and routes for serving all mobile market access points. Market Manager - Shaheed Harris, SCF farmer-member oversees the operation of Midlands Organics Mobile Farmers' Market by developing market vehicle and equipment, coordinating produce pick-ups with farmer-members, designating efficient distribution routes each week, building relationships with market managers and community partners (churches, schools, hospitals, parks) at food desert access points, and managing SNAP/EBT and all project evaluation and grant reporting requirements. Assistant Market Manager- Phillip Henry, SCF farmer-member supports Market Manager in operation of Mobile Farmers' Market, provides distribution and market management support, and assists in coordinating pickups with farmer-members and deliveries at access points. Driver/Operator –Yolanda Harris, SCF farmer-member supports the Market Manager and Assistant Market Manager as a dedicated driver contributing to efficient distribution of farm products reaching a broader range of markets and access points. Project Director -Fathiyah Mustafa, SCF farmer-member leadership skills, vision and drive to help the communities has kept the project on track and focus. SCF Organic Farm farmers, members and producers have worked to grow the produce that the cooperative brings to the mobile farmers markets. Lastly but most important partner was the communities that allowed SCF Organic Farms, Ltd to set up the markets and access points at their churches, schools, hospitals, parks, community centers, art studios and etc..

## **Accomplishments:**

Midlands Organic Mobile Market 2.0, Expanding into Food Deserts Project has moved on schedule with the goals that SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd wanted to accomplish with grant funds.

- 1) Created 4 new jobs by hiring a Market Manager, Assistant Market Manager, Driver/Operator and Outreach and Marketing Consultant.
- 2) Leased a 2014 Ford Transit through McLaughlin Ford Motor Inc. which increases the travel efficiency, time management and the number of Mobile Markets and food deserts that can be attended and created.
- 3) Purchased signs, tents, coolers, tables, shelves and etc... This is everything that is needed to make a pop up market no matter how isolated the location is.
- 4) Purchased 2 new wireless EBT terminals to accept EBT/SNAP to make it easier for people to use the EBT/SNAP services. The VeriFone VX 680 wireless terminals were chosen because they are easy to use.
- 5) Trained Market Manager and SCF- Participating Farm members on how to use new EBT Terminals. See online training link: [VeriFone training](#)
- 6) Conducted over 7 workshops with food demonstrations in new identified food desert destinations. They were at South Sumter Resource Center, Catchall Community Center, Greater House of Prayer, Orangehill AME Church, Rafting Creek Community Center, Community Missionary Charity Organization and Manning Avenue Free Art Studio.
- 7) Through community building, food desert areas in census designated place (CDP) like [Eastover](#), [Manning](#), [South Sumter](#), [Rembert](#), [Wedge Field](#), and [Sand hills](#) which are all in the Midlands region of South Carolina now have access to more healthy affordable organic produce in their area.
- 8) In the first quarter, Midlands Organic Mobile Market 2.0, Expanding into Food Deserts Project has produce \$1865.00 and out of that \$523.00 was done through EBT Terminal. So far EBT Terminals

sales are accounting for approximately 28% of sales so far. SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd was not even into the main produce seasons such as spring and summer when SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd has the food that it procure to supply the Midlands Organic Mobile Market 2.0, Expanding into Food Deserts Project. For the Period of September 30, 2014 – September 30, 2015 the Midlands Organic Mobile Market 2.0, Expanding into Food Deserts Project has generated over \$25,000.00 during the peak months of May, June, July and August which equates to approximately \$6250.00 per month during the harvest season.

9) By observation, we have begun to notice that others are starting to follow our trend of mobile markets in the Midlands of South Carolina. We are seeing a surge in mobile market growth by way of food trucks, ice-cream vans, mobile car wash and pop up markets that have seen our success with the Midlands Organic Mobile Market and became inspired to use similar methods to start their business by going directly to the customers.

10) Timeline of Accomplishments:

The Midlands Organic Mobile Market 2.0, Expanding into Food Deserts Project was funded by USDA Agricultural Marketing Service on Sept. 30, 2014. In October 2014 SCF requested funds to lease the Distribution Van and purchase signs, tents, tables and logo for van. SCF requested an advance for funds to cover the first quarter salaries for 250 hrs for Mobile Market Manager, Assistant Mobile Market Manager and Driver/operator. SCF also requested an advance for funds to cover half the salary for the Marketing and Outreach Consultant. After consulting with David Harper in the first week of November, SCF fill all the position for Mobile Market Manager, Assistant Mobile Market Manager and Driver/operator. On Nov. 12, 2014, SCF leased a 2014 Ford Transit through McLaughlin Ford Motor Inc. On Nov. 22, 2014, SCF host its first workshop for this project at the Manning Avenue Free Art Studio in CDP South Sumter, S.C. to start the introduction of the mobile market to the community. The months of December, January and February was spent with the consultant, SCF members and the community to establish the market access points the we had identified. This included doing workshops and meeting with South Sumter Resource Center, Catchall Community Center, Greater House of Prayer, Orangehill AME Church, Rafting Creek Community Center, Community Missionary Charity Organization and Manning Avenue Free Art Studio. During this time, SCF also was outfitting the distribution van by way of Sign Wave and getting all the necessary equipment for the pop up mobile market. In February, SCF purchased VeriFone VX 680 wireless terminals. SCF begins to do the new mobile markets at the market access points and in the first quarter October – March SCF generates over \$1865.00 in EBT wireless terminals sales. During the Second Quarter April – June the market picked up in sales but the EBT wireless terminals sales stop because our Project Director Azeez Mustafa passed April 20, 2015 unexpectedly. Fathiyyah Mustafa by way of cooperative board was elected as President of SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd. Fathiyyah Mustafa role Project Coordinator was approved by USDA Agricultural Marketing Service's Grant Agreement Amendment 1 on May 15, 2015. After applying in May 2015 for a new SNAP EBT Permit, SCF was approved and got its permit on June 1 2015. Since then Midlands Organic Mobile Market 2.0, Expanding into Food Deserts Project is still conducting its markets in food deserts and low income areas throughout the Midlands until present.

## **Beneficiaries:**

Midlands Organic Mobile Market 2.0, Expanding into Food Deserts Project has been a great benefit to the following:

- 1) Primary beneficiaries are low-income population in Midlands region and surrounding counties of South Carolina in food deserts. Markets in these counties; Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Richland and Sumter County food deserts have been maintained.
- 2) Secondary beneficiaries are those living in these Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Richland and Sumter County food deserts that are not low income that come into the Midlands Organic Mobile Farmers' Market and support the market also.
- 3) Tertiary beneficiaries are other residents of Midlands region and surrounding counties of South Carolina and even from other states who are not low income and not living in food deserts, such as those who are SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd. clientele that support this model of farm to community movement.
- 4) SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd. as a cooperative is also a beneficiary of the Midlands Organic Mobile Market 2.0, expanding into Food Deserts Project. Its beneficiaries are the small farm producers and SCF member-farmers who will have increased opportunities to market and sell their products directly to customers throughout the areas being served. This has created new jobs and inspired more people to join SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd.

#### Quantifiable Measure of Beneficiaries and their Demographics

- Number of People assisted; Approximately thousands of people in the form of customers, members, and patrons at its 13 main access points (1) Kershaw County at the Historic Camden Revolutionary War Park (park), (2) The Cypress Center, (3) Clarendon Health Systems (hospital) in Clarendon county, (4) Rafting Creek Community Center in Rembert, S. C., (5) Irmo Market Irmo Town Park (park), (6) The Sand hills, (7) USC Healthy Market, (8) Forest Acres, (9) Rosewood Market in Columbia, S.C. in Richland County and (10) Community Missionary Charity Organization in Wedge Field, S.C. which is a census designated place (CDP), (11) South Sumter Resource Center farmers market, (12) Manning Avenue Free Art Studio and (13) SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd. Brewington location in Sumter County.

- Number of businesses assisted; 13

SCF has built a growing network of community-based partnerships with businesses identified as: Land in Common, John E. Brown, CPA, Henry Farm, Reid Farm, Ovis Hill Farm, Grow Food Carolina, Clarendon Medical Hospital, Asya's Organic Farm, Earthfare, Rosewood Market, 14 Carrots and Wholefoods. These 13 businesses identified are the businesses that SCF has assisted directly and indirectly through community-based partnerships.

- Number of cooperatives assisted; 15

SCF has built a growing network of community-based partnerships with cooperatives and nonprofit organizations identified as: South Sumter Resource Center; Rafting Creek Community Center; SC ETV; High Hills Community 4-H Club; The Cypress Foundation; Girl Scouts – Mt. Zion Baptist; Neriah CDC; Sumter Youth Academy; MAFS, Inc.; Rural Advancement Fund; Diane’s Call, Inc.; The Zone @ Clarendon Health System; Auntie Karen Foundation; Eastern Carolina Organic (ECO); Carolina Farm Stewardship Association and Harvest Hope Food Bank. These 15 cooperatives identified are the cooperatives that SCF has assisted directly and indirectly through community-based partnerships.

- Number of member-farmers-producers assisted; 60

SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd has identified 60 SCF member-farmers producers assisted:

Abraham McLeod	Phillip Henry	Shaheed Harris
Talib Ameen	Fathiyyah Mustafa	Ronnie Plowden
Fred Mallet	Grace Jackson	Richard Bennett
Helen Parson	Rochelle Henry	Keremiah McCoy
Carrie Jackson	Yolanda Harris	Kerry Baker
Michael Sandloff	Annette Lewis	Vern Jackson
Sharon Sandloff	Fanta Hooker	Leo Mickens
Lillie Joe	Charles Porche	Donald Spirles
Lorenzo Stewart	Russell McCant	Gary Baker
Charles Hunter	Nellie Morris	Gerald Scriven
David Gibson	Wally Gibson	Julia Reed
Joan Henry	James Gibson	Elenora Baker
Lydia McCoy	Michael Singletary	Asya Harris
Brenda Martin	Michael Mitchell	Norwood Brunson
Joan Mobley	Joe Whiting	John Brown
Sarah Watson	Carl Holmes	Channie Coker
Linda Wilson	Margaret House	Arlene Brunson
Barbara Bowman	William Livingston	Lattimore Davis
Terry Lynn Greyson	Willie Mae Gibson	Asbury Davis
Lisa Macon	Harold Gibson	Angela Hitch

- Number of Educational Institutions assisted; 5

SCF has built a growing network of community-based partnerships with Educational Institutions identified as: Central Carolina Technical College, Clemson University, Florence-Darlington Technical College, SC State University, and University of South Carolina. These 5 Educational Institutions identified are the schools that SCF has assisted directly and indirectly through community-based partnerships.

### **Lessons Learned:**

SCF-Organic Farms, Ltd has learned a lot from working on the Midlands Organic Mobile Market 2.0, Expanding into Food Deserts Project.

- Our main lesson is to stick to the Work plan, Resource, and Timeline schedule.
- One of our unanticipated challenges was to find a mobile market vehicle outfitted the way we needed within the allowed budget. We had never done lease equipment agreement on a vehicle before. Waiting on the Motor Company is what took longer than expected.
- We had an official in our cooperative pass away (Azeez Mustafa) and he was the principle person who signed the snap application so we had to do another snap application. We learned from that experience is that on a snap application when applying to be a snap retailer. You need to have more than one person on the Snap application in case someone quits the business or passes away.
- You have to consistently advertise and promote the market to keep people updated and aware that the market will be open and where the market will be located on a weekly basis.
- The specific advice we have for others taking on a similar project work is to make sure you stick to your plans and budgets in a grant and everything will run smoothly. Keep a good Project Director, a good Team and a good Certified Public Accountant (CPA).