

**Mandela MarketPlace** of Oakland, CA, received \$50,496 to purchase a refrigerated truck and conduct outreach and promotion to expand a wholesale product distribution network from farm to market that increases market access to limited-resource and minority producers.

[Final Report FY10](#)



# M A N D E L A M A R K E T P L A C E

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Mandela MarketPlace

Mandela Produce Project

11-25-G-1137

Oakland, CA

## PROJECT SUMMARY

Mandela Produce Project is a local wholesale distribution center that offers an alternative distribution network specifically tailored for resource-limited farmers and small retailers. We offer personalized service to small farms that cannot access mainstream distribution services due to cultural, language and economic barriers. We offer personalized service to small urban retailers that want to offer fresh affordable produce, but cannot take advantage of volume price breaks and wholesale quantities due to economic barriers. Mandela Produce specifically targets farmers and minority and under-resourced farmers who use healthy sustainable farming practices, and are committed to their role as stewards of the earth. Mandela MarketPlace works with 16+ producers who have limited access to an inner-city market base.

## PROJECT APPROACH

The overarching goals of Mandela Produce Project (MPP) is to link unmet community demand for affordable fresh foods with markets that expand income avenues for underserved, local minority producers utilizing sustainable farming.

Mandela Produce Project works directly with underserved producers within a 200 mile radius of Oakland to improve availability of locally produced foods for low-income people while improving the sales and market opportunity for producers. MPP will expand our local distribution center that buys from underserved producers and sells to emerging urban markets, and meets both community need for fresh food and farmer need for expanded opportunity in urban wholesale markets. MPP, building upon current Mandela MarketPlace programs that avails targeted low-income and elderly populations produce direct from farm to consumer.

Increase sales and producers will be built through coordination among our current network of small farmers, as well as new network members that consistently maintain organic and/or sustainable farming practices, through increased volume buying of fresh produce and a concerted social marketing campaign. Economy of scale will be further

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enhanced through development of new venues based on the Mandela Foods model and supported by our partnership with ACPHD to meet foods needs in low-income areas of the county.

## GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

Produce purchases from the Mandela network of 16 minority farmers, in concert with other local organic growers, currently supply 85% of the average 10,000 lb. monthly produce needs of Mandela Foods and Mandela market stands, and are projected at well over 100,000 lbs annually -- with anticipated positive public health impacts through a life course perspective for over 9,000 residents of West Oakland. Mandela Produce Project directly benefits 16 local producers and 5 neighborhood retail markets, 1 grocery retail, 4 market booths that meet producer needs. Mandela conducts neighborhood-based education, outreach and marketing activities to build an emerging consumer base, raise consumer awareness about availability of producer in the "new" market settings -- whether stores, produce booths, delivery, and so on, and link producers and consumers through small, local markets.

## RESULTS

- 12 producers realized increased sales of an average of \$73,000 from direct wholesale to urban consumer markets
- 4 convenience stores, 1 grocer purchase directly from alternative distribution center
- 40-50% of MFC produce comes from direct local producer network
- Distributed over 500 marketing and outreach materials, conducted 50 outreach activities/events, hosted 2 farm tours and 3 farmer presentations
- Created a planting plan with one farmer, and helped him access a microloan to increase his production

Objective	Timeline	Outcome
<b>1: Identify and enroll 4-6 additional producers in Mandela Produce Network</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandela established Earth's Produce Distribution as a wholesale distribution program to implement the MPP project</li> <li>• Earth's Produce enrolled 8 new farmers into its network: Catalan Farms, Yerena Farms, Tarlesson,</li> </ul>	<b>Complete</b>	Enrolled new farmers into network, supplied 100,000 lbs of produce from farmer partners to small markets
<b>2: Identify and enroll 4 additional Healthy Neighborhood Stores Alliance members</b>	<b>Complete</b>	Markets supplied over 100,000 lbs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Healthy Neighborhood Store Alliance program enrolled 6 stores: Mandela Foods Cooperative, Bottles Liquor, Millenium Market, N&amp;A Market, Brothers Market, SavMor Market</li> <li>• MPP also supplies 4 market stands: North Oakland Senior Center, West Oakland Health Center, Oak Center One, Campbell Village</li> </ul>		<p>direct from local farmer partners to supply markets 65% Consumers reported increased consumption of fresh produce by 1-2 cups per day</p>
<p><b>3: Develop social marketing plan to enroll at least 4 new wholesale customers and increase by 50% the aggregation and urban distribution of produce from local minority farmers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandela distributes monthly newsletters, facebook updates and twitter feeds to raise awareness about local produce and farmers</li> <li>• Mandela conducted 2 farm tours to connect urban consumers with local farmers</li> <li>• Mandela hosted 3 farmer visits at Mandela Foods so that consumers and farmers could meet and raise awareness about local farming</li> </ul>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>	<p>Hosted 80 residents on 2 farm tours where urban residents learned about farming and met the farmers Invited and hosted 3 events where farmers came to Mandela Foods to meet consumers and talk about their produce and farms Distributed over 500 informational materials, 24 newsletters, and weekly twitter and facebook postings to increase awareness in the community about buying from local producers</p>

### LESSONS LEARNED

*Mandela Produce Project* establishes a model for producers to access an alternative distribution network that supplies small urban retail and direct marketing opportunities. It also builds the consumer base through education, outreach and exposure to producers. This convergence gives producers access to emerging and growing urban markets, and allows them to increase their production and sales. This project develops an alternative distribution-consumption model that can be replicated in other similar communities. The long-term impact is an established produce

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distribution business that serves the particular needs of limited resource, minority and small farmers who may otherwise not have access to wholesale markets.

We met stated program goals to establish alternative distribution network for 16 local producers, including system of invoicing, ordering, pickup and delivery and seasonal supply projections. One farmer in particular who just started his farm in 2009 was able to leverage the support from Mandela to qualify for a \$5,000 microloan, plant crops specifically for our markets, host farm tours, and begin to provide produce to another retail outlet nearby his farm. During this period, we increased individual farmer income by an average of \$per year.

We postponed the purchase of the initially researched refrigerated truck in order to take advantage of a new, eco-friendly leased truck opportunity. With the newer truck, we will expand services to farmers for produce storage as the truck will also act as a mobile cold-box more accessible to the farmers.

We are so excited to have developed an urban consumer base that purchases over 120,000 lbs per year supplied by Earth's Produce from local farmers, 50% from direct farm pickups. During this grant period, we expanded the retail opportunities for the farmers from 1 retail location to 6, and increased our market booths from 1 to 4. We have conducted over 50 tabling and outreach events, hosted 2 farm tours and 3 events where farmers met with urban customers, we distributed over 500 nutrition information cards and recipes, we display information at 5 retail locations including information about farmers, nutrition, seasonality, and recipes. We conducted 550 consumer assessments and found that over 60% of consumers reported increasing their consumption of fresh produce due to its quality and availability in our retail markets.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

More information can be obtained on our website: [www.mandelamarketplace.org](http://www.mandelamarketplace.org), link to our program: Earth's Produce Distribution.

You can subscribe to our newsletter at: [www.mandelamarketplace.org](http://www.mandelamarketplace.org) and link to our News & Events tab.

#### **CONTACT PERSON**

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