

**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](mailto: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.

<b>Report Date Range:</b> <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	11/1/15-12/31/15
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<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Great Northern Services
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Siskiyou County Local Food Center Feasibility Study
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-CA-0019
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Weed, CA
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$11,744

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: ***Clearly define the vision and mission of the local food center***

a. Progress Made:

Activity 1: Work with advisory committee to define center concept and mission.

Through community meetings and one-on-one meetings, the concept of a local food center was explored with community members, including producers, farmers and ranchers, as well as community members involved in local food in other ways and local government officials. The concept visioning was informed by exploring local food models in other areas of California and Oregon. While the visioning activity was robust, no mission was defined.

In 2013 Great Northern did a needs assessment of the county’s food consumption that looks specifically at issues related to access to healthy food and community driven projects to address those issues. The first phase was a survey and the second phase was community food conversations around the county. It is out of these conversations the desire for the county to have a local food center originated. Community meetings and a broad survey in early 2014 provided additional background for the Siskiyou County Local Food Center Feasibility Study. Both of these activities helped inform the work done during this Feasibility Study.

The Feasibility Study helped create a detailed concept for a facility, the equipment that could be provided, and the business operating structure, based on identified interest in the County. The mission of the envisioned local food center is to assist in development infrastructure and supporting the local food culture to promote a thriving local food economy.

b. Impact on Community: This activity helped create a detailed concept for a facility, the equipment that could be provided, the business operating structure, based on identified interest in the County.

ii. Goal/Objective 2: ***Engage the local food region’s farmers, ranchers and producers and training partners***

a. Progress Made:

Activity 1: Engage users, evaluate each proposed component of the facility

The outreach for this activity was aimed at determining level of interest in the facility concept as well as specific facility components. This was done with one-on-one conversations and an online survey. The survey was sent to 40 producers, 12 ranchers, 26 farmers and 11 gardeners who have sold their crops through local outlets. Through this Feasibility Study and another program that allowed Great Northern to purchase food from local farmers in summer 2015, we learned that most of Siskiyou County’s farmers are small-scale and grow a very limited volume (although a broad array) of crops. With the survey and conversations, we found that the greatest interest in a commercial kitchen is from those making shelf-

stable products for retail sale. A small number of farmers and ranchers are interested in refrigerated and freezer storage space. The greatest expressed interest was for use of a commercial production kitchen by users who would use it several times a month. With the outreach to farmers and ranchers, we found that a small number are interested in a facility for making value added products, and also an interest in working with a separate business that would make products from their farm/ranch crops.

Activity 2: Meet with potential anchor tenants to determine level of commitment

Initially, five potential anchor tenants were identified, with three interested in conversations about the food center concept. Each business expressed interest in the project; however, without a development timeline, none could state a level of commitment. The benefit in this activity is that there is a list of businesses to contact for this role, should a plan for build out be put into place. Additionally, information about their needs in terms of space and equipment was collected.

Activity 3: Contact potential training and education programming partners

Within Siskiyou County, Jefferson Economic Development Institute (JEDI) is a strong training partner with classes that suit small business owners. JEDI, which now manages the Mt. Shasta Certified Farmers Market, is committed to working with entrepreneurs, including those in the local food arena. JEDI is located in Mt. Shasta; its partnership in a local food facility would be based largely on which town the facility is located in. Other training partners were identified beyond Siskiyou County, both in California and in Southern Oregon. These partners could hold one-time or short series workshops. Those training partners include three that can offer classes and workshops for small-scale farmers. Those partners located in Jackson County, Oregon, which is just over the state line from Siskiyou County, offer workshop and classes that are open and available to Siskiyou County residents. Some local farmers and food business owners have attended workshops and classes in Jackson County in the past.

b. Impact on Community: Through this work, many connections were made between Great Northern and local food entrepreneurs and their needs were identified. These connections will serve in future work, not only on a local food center project, but also in forming networks and possibly holding workshops identified through the process. All of this serves to strength Siskiyou County's local food culture.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: ***Identify best practices in similar successful models***

a. Progress Made:

Activity: Learn from similar successful facilities in other communities

Extensive work was done to locate geographically relevant and nearby local food facilities. Eight were found within a 300-mile radius, with none located in adjacent counties (all were at least 200 miles away). Surprisingly, Jackson County, located adjacent to Siskiyou County and which has a well-developed local food resource network, does not have a local food hub or commercial production kitchen facility. The models reviewed and research represented low to no-infrastructure food

hubs, food business incubators and commercial kitchens run by a city government, non-profits, a city fairgrounds and a private business. Four of these were visited by staff and provided broad sharing about their operations and lessons learned in their operations.

This information was shared with members of the local food community and government officials through meetings and small group conversations. The diversity of models provided a view of different operating models, physical facilities and components provided and level of staff involvement. Since these models were so varied, a comparison of success factors was not made; however, success factors were identified relative to the specific model, its community and the type of organization/business/government body operating the facility. This provided an opportunity to consider models based on the type of lead organization and its capabilities. These models and factors were then discussed in the context of Siskiyou County's geography and location of farms and ranches, population centers, largest farmers markets, available resources and relative ease of transportation. Based on the discussion of these factors, an outlined description of a local food hub was crafted.

b. Impact on Community: The findings from this work inspired members of the community to imagine different types of models and relationships, particularly in light of elements of Siskiyou County's local food culture. It led to conversations with local government officials to explore a hybrid government/non-profit built and operated model.

iv. Goal/Objective 4: ***Develop a diversified financial strategy aimed at sustainability***

a. Progress Made:

Activity: Determine strong financial components and identify weaknesses/small income streams

Through conversations, meetings and surveys, elements of strong interest in a local food center were identified. A commercial kitchen, dry, refrigerated and freezer storage and retail space were those areas of greatest interest. The large span between interested parties who actually operate an existing business and those hoping to start a business made it difficult to set numbers to potential revenue streams and levels of use. However, it did provide a firm direction for the critical elements that such a facility would include. Conversations included the consideration for how to provide services and identify existing facilities so that the local food business community might grow in strength and numbers to be able to support the build out of a local food facility.

Additionally, the balance of revenue streams was considered in light of the various models of local food centers that were explored and discussed for Goal 3. New considerations about how to balance revenue streams grew from conversations with operators at those facilities and brought a broader scope of conversation to this element.

b. Impact on Community: During this work it became apparent that there was a broad range of support and ideas on how to progress, ranging from the desire to make use of the limited existing commercial kitchen facilities in the County and enthusiasm for developing a plan to build a local food center.

v. Goal/Objective 5: ***Determine whether to move forward on creating a local food center***

a. Progress Made:

Activity: Make determination on concept viability and sustainability

Through community meetings, no consensus was arrived at as to whether Siskiyou County's local food culture is ready to support the creation of a local food center. However, broad support was identified throughout the feasibility study activity. In meeting with operators of food hubs in other areas, typically those facilities and program were built and run by government entities or organizations that had the vision and experience to build such a facility. Those operators then did the work of contacting and soliciting to local farmers, ranchers and food producers to use their facilities.

This feasibility study confirmed that there is broad interest in Siskiyou County for such a facility. Organizationally, staff at Great Northern support moving forward with next steps of creating a conceptual plan to engage government partners and developing a full business plan. Members of the community meetings expressed the desire for ongoing gatherings to continue networking and identifying low-risk ways to build the local food culture.

b. Impact on Community: This activity supported the desire for continued community conversation and also provided direction for Great Northern Services.

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. ***N/A for this planning grant activity.***

- 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? ***N/A for this planning grant activity.***

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners? We have diverse community partnerships in terms of connecting with training organizations, farmers market managers, local government

and business owners. These are all in the nature of requesting information and sharing about this planning activity.

- ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project? They have contributed through sharing information and connections.
- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant? Their information will inform the final products of this activity.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? *We did not use contractors.*

6. Have you publicized any results yet?\*

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
- ii. Findings from this feasibility study have been shared through conversations with community members and key local partners in advancing the concept of a local food hub. Additionally, a brochure sharing the vision of a local food center was drafted.
- iii. To whom did you publicize the results? The concept of a local food center and the supporting brochure was shared in conversation the City of Mt. Shasta, USDA Rural Development, McConnell and Ford Family Foundations.
- iv. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? As this is still in early concept phase, the vision for the facility was shared with a small number of stakeholders. In total, five key stakeholders were approached in conversation.

\*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?

Discussions with the City of Mt. Shasta, which owns land that is being prepared for development, with our local USDA Rural Development representative and several foundations have all been very positive and exciting for economic vitality at a local level.

- i. If so, how did you collect the information? Conversations were conducted with these key stakeholders to share the concept and inquire about support for the concept.
- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? The City of Mt. Shasta expressed interest in locating the Local Food Center on the City's economic development property known as The Landing. The City is currently in the process of drafting the master plan for this 127-acre property and is willing to include the Local Food Center in the planning for the property. Additionally, the City is open to ongoing conversations about potential funding and management partnerships of the Center, based on information GNS shared about the City-operated local food facility in Arcata, CA. The local USDA Rural Development representative expressed support for the overall work that GNS has done in developing food programs that serve the county and particular interest in helping GNS fund the Food Center project through a combination of loan and grant programs. The Ford Family Foundation and the McConnell Fund of Shasta Regional Community Foundation are both interested in hearing more about the project as it develops and how their particular funding guidelines can assist with the project.

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? No
  - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

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 found that local food facility operators in other areas were very willing to share the story of their projects, insights gained, lessons learned and considerations and concerns for the future. Great Northern made several contacts that will serve the organization, local government staff and community members in the future, should they reach out to these other local food projects.

We identified a high level of interest in local food businesses in Siskiyou County, and yet a much smaller number of actual businesses (reflecting the high level of interest in starting food businesses). Jefferson Economic Development Institute has shared that they receive a substantial number of inquiries of people interested in starting a food business and looking for a commercial kitchen in which to make goods. This indicates that while a local food hub is needed to provide the infrastructure and equipment needed to serve those businesses, there is also a need for technical support and business advising for food businesses specifically.

When the Local Food Center Feasibility Study scope of work was initially written, we envisioned a deeper degree of conversation and decision making with community members. What we found during this activity is that community members were happy to discuss the idea of a food center; yet it was difficult to have fruitful conversations about the details of balancing revenue streams, envisioning an operating model and penciling out the feasibility of a facility that could yield an operational model. This is not due to any lack of interest or enthusiasm from community members. We found that the work of evaluating elements to create an operation plan could be better advanced by a focused project team with a clear decision making tree, specifics about funding sources and their requirements and finely evaluated operating objectives. Lessons learned here included attaining a better sense for the aspects in which community involvement was beneficial to advancing the project: the exploration of ideas about local resources and potential benefits of a local food center and discussion of elements that seem most beneficial to the local food culture of Siskiyou County. Additionally, we gained a better sense of those elements that need a lead organization to develop and move forward: evaluating facility elements and equipment expenses versus potential revenue; creating a diversified financial platform for a facility and its programs; and placing the decision about facility build out in the hands of a single entity that will be the lead in project development. Ultimately, while a local food center is a community asset, a project of this size needs a leader to build it and cultivate ongoing support and use of the facility.

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:

This feasibility study had less community involvement than hoped for in the idealized community advisory committee. Community members did indeed come together to discuss the concept; however, as a group, we were unable to make clear statements about feasibility. Community members and business owners shared visions, concepts, concerns and thoughts; however, the diverse variety in backgrounds made it difficult to chart a clear forward path through community conversation. Ultimately, one organization had to take the lead, using everything from the process to inform its own decisions.

Additionally, at the time of implementation, we found far fewer farms producing food for direct to consumer sales. This was a surprise. Based on a list of farms selling at farmers markets in 2009, the metric of outreach to 50 farms appeared plausible. Actual number contacted was 26 farmers and 11 gardeners who have previously sold their goods. From the time of the grant application to project implementation, one large local food project closed its doors and one farmers market shifted its location and line up of farmers. These both impacted the number of farmers reached. In addition, most of the farmers contacted produce a small, fixed amount of produce and/or are happy with their production level and are uninterested in increasing production. The take away here is that farmers are not necessarily focused on a single bottom line with increasing production as a goal, and non-profits working to develop local food programs and facilities should not make the assumptions that farmers are focused on growth without developing a relationship with farmers to find out about their priorities.

- 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:

The administration of this planning project was most challenging in the managing of expectations and timelines. Shortly after being awarded the grant, Great Northern's office and warehouse, along with 125 homes in Weed, CA, were burned to the ground in the Boles Fire. The recovery from that disaster involved a significant amount of the planning grant project manager's time, as she organized the emergency food response to the Boles Fire for the residents of Weed. This altered the timeline for what was already an ambitious project. While this scenario is not likely for most grant awardees, it did bring home several lessons for this organization. We learned that even for a project that the organization has a lot of excitement for, it would have been more manageable to design a planning project that did not have quite as high of expectations as this project did. Additionally, we had a number of staff changes after the fire that impacted the initial plan for the feasibility study. Organizationally, we had to shift staff, which meant assessing strengths and experience of other staff members to find the right folks to join the team for this project. That responsive flexibility and agility, while uncomfortable at times, was ultimately a boon for the project. In regards to working with USDA, we found the staff to be very helpful as GNS made changes to its staff assignments and budget.

## 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.

Great Northern, with the support and partnership with the City of Mt. Shasta, USDA Rural Development, the McConnell Foundation and Ford Family Foundations, will move forward with next steps of creating a conceptual plan to fully engage partners and developing a full business plan. With the local partnerships developed, Great Northern will begin the process of applying for an implementation grant and seeking other funding sources to support the creation of a business plan for the build out of facility.

- 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 next step for this project is to develop a complete business plan for a facility. The elements of that business plan and activities to support it are:

- Vision and Mission
- Business Plan Development
  - i. Learning more from established models
  - ii. Budget and funding sources
  - iii. Organizational Structure
  - iv. Engaging the community
  - v. solidifying partner and supporters
  - vi. Education component
  - vii. Local retail component
  - viii. Business incubator and Business development
  - ix. Storage
  - x. Events