

Promote Low-income Consumer Awareness of Farmers Market Accessibility

Kansas Grown, Inc. of Wichita, Kansas received \$18,160 to purchase EBT equipment, and to implement a marketing campaign to promote use of the Kansas Grown! Inc Farmers Market by low-income consumers.

[Final Report FY09](#)

Date: December 29, 2011

Recipient Name: Kansas Grown! Inc. Farmers' Market

Title of Project: Promote Low-Income Awareness of Farmers' Market Accessibility

Grant Number: 12-25-G-0936

Location: Wichita, KS

Contact Name/Telephone Number: Lisa Corr 316-706-1201

Final Performance Report

Project Summary:

The Kansas Grown! Inc. Farmers' Market was one of two EBT/Debit pilot programs started in the summer of 2006. As the program evolved over the next few years, it appeared there wasn't a significant increase in the usage of the "Vision Card", the program used in Kansas for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The debit card side of the program was doing well, with marked improvement each year. The desire to promote low-income consumer awareness of farmers' market accessibility, was the project proposal pursued and gratefully awarded through the 2009 FMPP grant.

The primary goal was to promote and advertise the EBT/debit technology to consumers, making available fresh, affordable food products for their families, also creating increased vendors' sales. The project evolved in five (5) stages: Stage One was to identify the most effective communication outlets for reaching low-income consumers through collaborate partnerships. Stage Two and Three was to design and develop promotional materials and communications to target consumers to increase awareness and generate greater use of the EBT Vision Card at the Kansas Grown! Inc. Farmers' Market. Market access promotions included bookmarks, brochures, Public Service Announcements (PSA) highlighting the importance of the market for the Vision Card program and transit ads promoting access to the market. Stage Four involved the distribution of promotional materials and communications to collaborating partnerships. Stage Five provided monitoring transactions through the EBT/debit technology.

Project Approach:

The Project Manager approached the task by first identifying who would best fit the role of collaborating third party partners. Research and networking secured the Social Rehabilitation Services Wichita Regional Office (SRS), Sedgwick County Health Department, Sedgwick County Department on Aging, Sedgwick County Extension Office, Kansas State University Communications Department, City Blue Printing, Wichita Transit System and KMUW Radio, Sedgwick County school systems and Sedgwick County schools and public libraries in the partnership.

The next step involved the development of themes and messages, communications, and promotional materials. This stage took many hours. (Project Manager was the only one working on this stage.) Appointments and schedules had to be made with various partners to determine guidelines, timelines, etc. After several sessions, the design for the transit ads was completed, along with the brochure and bookmark layouts. Filming time was scheduled with the Kansas State University Communications Department, which involved coordinating with the Wichita Transit System. The department director traveled to the market from Manhattan, KS to film on

an actual market day, incorporating the bus stop area in the PSA. Once this phase was completed, it was time to move on to the next step.

The third step moved ahead with the production of the promotional materials. Bookmarks and brochures were sent to the printing company. Drafts of the PSAs were provided to the Project Manager for approval. Transit ad screens were finalized and produced. At this point the completion timeline for this step was behind schedule.

Distribution of the promotional materials was the next step. The transit ads began running on the buses in May 2010, on schedule. The brochures and PSAs were delivered to the SRS office. The brochures were placed in their "Welcome" bags and the PSAs ran on their telecommunications monitor in their waiting rooms. Brochures were dispensed to nine Sedgwick Health Department clinics, as well as, the Sedgwick County Department on Aging and the Sedgwick County Extension Office and area libraries. The distribution of the bookmarks was delayed due to a packaging miscommunication. There were 16 designs of bookmarks. They were to have been packaged with all 16 designs included in each case. They were received with one design being packaged per case. Project Manager hand sorted 2000 bookmarks to distribute to SRS and the health clinics. With time being a factor, funding was used to assist with the sorting of the bookmarks to provide the materials to SRS and health clinics in a timely manner. It was determined that the distribution to the school systems and libraries would be delayed. Additional assistance was needed in order to complete the sorting of the bookmarks and funding would not be available. Communicating the dilemma to the project partners opened up other avenues for a solution. The Retired Seniors Volunteer Services group (RSVP) and three students needing "community service" hours worked over several weeks sorting the remainder of the bookmarks (100,000 all together). This was a very time consuming task. One that was worked on as time would allow. Therefore, there was a greater delay in dispensing the bookmarks to the school systems. A decision was made by the Project Manager to wait to disburse the bookmarks until April 2011, when school was drawing to an end and the market season was just getting started. This would allow ample time to complete the sorting of the bookmarks without rushing through the process.

The final step was processed in three phases: the daily EBT/debit terminal records, Rapid Market Assessment (RMA), and a verbal summary survey performed at the point of service with random customers. The RMA was administered August 2010, with great success.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

The main project goal was to increase the awareness of the token based EBT/debit technology available at the market to low-income consumers, which would provide accessibility to healthy, fresh, affordable food products for their families. Increasing consumer awareness could increase customer base, enhancing the vendors' sales.

The following table provides information based on number of transactions and dollars in tokens purchased from the inception of the program in 2006. One can clearly see the imbalance of growth for the EBT Vision Card users versus the debit card users in the first three years. The increase in the usage of the Vision Card is clearly documented in the figures for 2009 and 2010.

EBT/Debit Summary Totals Table:

Market Year	# of EBT (Vision) Transactions	# of Debit Transactions	Vision Card Token Sales	Debit Card Token Sales
8/2 – 10/28/2006	9	46	\$242.00	\$1448.00
4/28 - 10/27/2007	12	47	\$456.00	\$3895.00
4/5 – 10/25/2008	34	209	\$650.00	\$7175.00
4/4 – 10/31/2009	104	280	\$3327.00	\$8910.00
4/3/ - 10/30/2010	178	368	\$5111.00	\$11577.00
7/9 – 10/29/2011	110	136	\$2238.00	\$4254.00

The figures for 2011 are incomplete at this time due to a disaster. Explanation will follow.

The program was successful based on the increases shown from 2008 to 2010. The projected increases weren't as high a percentage as we had anticipated, but they were significant.

Below are the results of the RMA performed August 7, 2010. A second RMA was planned for July 2011, but due to a disaster it was not performed.

**KANSAS GROWN! INC. FARMERS' MARKET
2009 FMPP GRANT
RAPID MARKET ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

08/07/2010

TABLE 1: DID YOU KNOW YOU COULD USE YOUR DEBIT CARD OR VISION CARD AT THE MARKET?			
TIME OF DAY	YES	NO	TOTAL
7:00 a.m.	36	70	106
8:00 a.m.	51	11	162
9:00 a.m.	19	86	105
10:00 a.m.	31	112	143
11:00 a.m.	15	47	62
TOTAL	152	426	578

TABLE 2: HOW MUCH WILL YOU SPEND AT THE MARKET TODAY?

TIME OF DAY	\$0	<\$10	\$10	\$20	\$30	\$50	\$75	TOTAL
7:00 a.m.	0	3	22	37	35	12	1	110
8:00 a.m.	3	14	25 ½	62	42 ½	10	4	161
9:00 a.m.	2	22	51	49	30	2	4	160
10:00 a.m.	0	14	20	48	15	3	1	101
11:00 a.m.	5	12	14	12	16	4	2	65
TOTAL	10	65	132 ½	208	138 ½	31	12	588

Table 3. How did you find out about the market?

TIME OF DAY	BUS ADS	BROCHURES/ BOOKMARKS	FRIEND/ FAMILY/ COWORKER	RADIO/TV MEDIA	INTERNET	OTHER	TOTAL
7:00 a.m.	3	0	48	7	0	86	144
8:00 a.m.	1	1	43	3	7	72	127
9:00 a.m.	0	0	51	0	3	57	111
10:00 a.m.	1	0	62	3	1	71	138
11:00 a.m.	1	0	31	1	4	31	68
TOTAL	6	1	235	14	15	317	588

Table 4. How often do you come to the Market?

TIME OF DAY	ALMOST EVERY WEEK	5 – 8 TIMES EACH SESSION	1 – 4 TIMES EACH SESSION	FIRST TIME	TOTAL
7:00 a.m.	72	18	15	6	111
8:00 a.m.	79	31	35	15	160
9:00 a.m.	40	23	31	15	109
10:00 a.m.	32	15	56	36	139
11:00 a.m.	9	9	26	23	67
TOTAL	232	96	163	95	586

Table 5. How do you make your market purchases?					
TIME OF DAY	DEBIT CARDS & TOKENS	VISION CARDS & TOKENS	CASH	KSFMNP VOUCHERS	TOTAL
7:00 a.m.	5	1	135	1	142
8:00 a.m.	2	1	59	2	64
9:00 a.m.	4	0	104	3	111
10:00 a.m.	7 ½	5	147 ½	2	162
11:00 a.m.	2	0	102	2	106
TOTAL	20 ½	7	547 ½	10	585

The RMA was conducted with the assistance of the Sedgwick County Extension Office Master Gardeners volunteers and market volunteers. The information provided will better help the market board to understand the needs of the consumers. One thing is definite, the lack of knowledge of the availability of the EBT/debit program at the farmers' market. The conclusion drawn from the RMA is that this program has to be promoted in a larger extent in order to reach the targeted consumers.

Beneficiaries:

In the current state of our economy, it is evident that the low-income consumer has and will continue to benefit from the availability of the EBT/debit technology at the farmers' market. With more consumers unemployed, more benefits will be applied for, therefore increasing the need to provide information of the availability of the EBT/debit program. Consumers come to rely on the quality of product purchased at the farmers' market and the personal relationship they establish with the vendors. This project allowed the market to reach the low-income consumer through the printed material made available to the different agencies that are providing services already to low-income clients.

The health department clinics, department on aging, and the schools throughout the county benefited by having promotional products made available to them to distribute to clients helping them to express the importance of providing fresh, healthy, affordable food products for their families. With many budgets being cut, this project help to provide informative materials to the different agencies that focus on health and well being.

Funds spent with the marketing entities (City Blue Printing, Wichita Transit, KMUW Public Radio and Kansas State University) that provided the printed materials, telecommunication services and the remote advertising benefited from this projects. This in turn, helped to support the community in sustainability. An added benefit came from the partnership with KMUW Radio. They did a point of interest segment on the Wichita farmers' markets.

Referencing the EBT/Debit Summaries Table, there was a substantial increase in the use of the Vision Card after the implementation of the FMPP Grant project. Through the partnerships established (Sedgwick County Health Department Clinics, Wichita Regional Social and Rehabilitation Service Department, Sedgwick County Department on Aging, and libraries and schools in 22 communities) with the provision of the FMPP Grant project, the theme of this project will continue to be carried forward.

Lessons Learned:

The first lesson learned was the process of grant writing. This is not a task to be taken lightly. Preparing a grant is far more intense than just writing a few words down on paper. It was quite the educational experience. The Kansas Grown! Inc. Farmers' Market operated the EBT/Debit technology at the market for three (3) years preceding 2009. Those past years' program records helped in the decision to pursue the FMPP grant, because the use of the EBT (low-income) supplemental nutrition assistance program was barely being utilized by consumers attending the market. Thus, inspiring the need to promote low-income consumer awareness of the accessibility to the farmers' market through the use of EBT/debit technology, making available fresh, healthy, locally grown, affordable food products to their families.

Every aspect of this project was a lesson learned. Embarking on the research to fulfill the goal of the proposed grant was a major task. Through the research, is where one begins to move through the stages defined in the grant. Networking is initiated to establish partnerships. This process involves many phone calls, emails and meetings. The networking process is a valuable tool. Several of the partnerships developed, by way of the FMPP grant, will continue to support the market by promoting awareness to the low-income consumer.

In hind sight, funding should have been considered to acquire at least one other individual to assist with this grant project. Possible funding should have been considered to seek outsourcing, to a marketing agency, the design portion of the printed materials. This stage of the project was extremely time consuming, but very educational. One person being the project manager, design artist, technology wizard, delivery person, secretary and a few other titles was a bit much. But, the knowledge gained from having to be so versatile was priceless.

The Kansas Grown! Inc. Farmers' Market had never performed a Rapid Market Assessment (RMA) before receiving the FMPP grant. The lessons learned from this exceptional tool were very rewarding. Many individuals were needed to successfully execute an RMA. (Volunteers from the Sedgwick County Extension Service and the Master Gardener's Program stepped up to help with this stage of the project. In doing so, this created more networking and establishing more partnerships than anticipated.) The questions for the RMA need to be carefully thought through, so that the best results are obtained for the project. This measuring tool proved to be very informative and important, as you can see from Tables 1 – 5 of the RMA results. Table 1 definitely showed that one consumer (1) out of four (4) knew they could use their EBT/debit cards at the farmers' market. The results of Table 1 alone created excitement knowing the grant project was moving the market in the right direction. The RMA results supplied beneficial information in other areas for the market to use.

The project was exciting and ran smoothly, with exception to a couple of hiccups. Lessons come in all forms. One lesson learned was copies should be made of everything and kept off site when involved in any type of grant project. Kansas Grown! Inc. Farmers' Market isn't large enough to need or secure office space. Therefore, the project manager's home becomes the office. As the project manager for this grant award, all purchases made, all documents and records kept for this project were housed at my home. My home was destroyed by a devastating fire June 30, 2011. It burned to the ground. Nothing was saved. A few files happened to be on my computer at work because I had emailed previous reports and forms to the U.S. Department of Agriculture

(USDA) for this grant project. A briefcase with most of the paper copies of reports and other documents sent to USDA were in my car. The fire happened at 2:15 p.m. and I had the briefcase at work with me. Some records won't be able to be recreated. There was a small supply of the bookmarks that I was planning to hand out in August that were destroyed. The laptop computer purchased with the funding was lost, along with all the flash drives that contained most of the backup, photographs, etc. Fortunately, complete care insurance was purchased on the laptop and work on securing a replacement has begun.

Additional Information:

Efforts made by the Sedgwick County Health Department clinics (there are six (6) of them) and the Wichita Regional Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) office were phenomenal. These two (2) project partners have direct contact daily with low – income clients. They kept a constant supply of the bookmarks and brochures on display and promoted the market to their clients during appointments. The SRS office has a copy of the Public Service Announcement (PSA) that plays in their client waiting room. The bookmarks and brochures are placed in their client “Welcome Bags”. Both project partners would request additional materials when their supply was running low. The volunteer assistance from the Sedgwick County Department on Aging was very instrumental in helping to correct the miscommunication on packaging from City Blue Printing. Without their assistance, sorting 100,000 bookmarks would have taken a few months instead of a few weeks.

Each contribution by each project partner was imperative in making this grant project successful. City Blue Printing worked hard to coordinate completion on the printing jobs for the brochures and the bookmarks. They were very easy to work with on this project. The same for the Wichita Transit System and their design company, Houck Transit Advertising.

An interview was performed by KMUW Public Radio supporting the area farmers' market EBT/Debit program and the availability of the transit system traveling to and from the market.

(Click on this link to hear the KMUW farmers' market interview

[http://www.kmuw.org/index.php/news/wichita_farmers_markets_try_to_boost_ebt_usage/.](http://www.kmuw.org/index.php/news/wichita_farmers_markets_try_to_boost_ebt_usage/))

The following link will take you to the Kansas Grown! Inc. Farmers' Market website to review, in detail, the information on the accessibility of the EBT/Debit technology available at the market and has the video documented by the Kansas State University Communications

Department, which was funded through the FMPP grant

<http://www.kansasgrownfarmersmarket.com/tokens.html>.

Below you will find a copy of the brochure created for this project using the grant funding. The brochure explains the EBT/Debit program, provides the market location and times, along with a transit map showing access to the market by way of the transit system. They also provide a contact number for more information about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These brochures incorporated the logos of all partners involved with this project. (See brochure below-to see page 2 double click on the brochure.)

**About the
KANSAS GROWN!
FARMERS' MARKET
SNAP (EBT)/Debit
Program**



Vision and Debit Cards are accepted at the Kansas Grown! Inc. Farmers' Market!

The KGFM is one of several markets in the state to accept Vision and Debit Cards. The Vision Card, a debit-like card, is the mechanism for the distribution of Food Stamps and Cash Assistance. Use of the Vision Card requires a processing machine and in the case of farmers' markets this machine is wireless and utilizes cell phone technology. Debit cards may also be processed on this device.

Shoppers swipe their cards, determine dollar amount needed and enter their PIN. Shoppers are then given Market Tokens, similar to wooden nickels (shown above), which may be used to purchase items from any market vendor just like cash.

Debit transactions are subject to a \$20 minimum and a \$1 service fee. The fee supports the transaction and monthly fees associated with the device and the EBT program.

The Food Assistance Program helps individuals with limited income buy nutritious foods. For more information, contact your local SRS office or call 1-800-221-5689.

SNAP (EBT)Debit Program promoted!



**Brought to you in partnership with the
Farmers' Market Promotion Program**

KANSAS GROWN! FARMERS' MARKET
PO BOX 771245
WICHITA, KS 67277-1245



MISSION

To provide area Kansas producers a means of marketing Kansas grown or produced products; and provide an opportunity for consumers to purchase quality products produced and grown in Kansas.

**Experience the Market
Fresh Difference!**

Farmers' Market

Guide

KANSAS GROWN!



For Up-to-Date Info Visit...
www.kansasgownfarmersmarket.com

Below is a one of the bookmark templates that was designed, printed and distributed with funding from the FMPP grant.

KANSAS GROWN!



For your convenience
Vision cards or debit
cards accepted at
the Farmers' Market!

Kansas Grown! Farmers' Market

Saturday 7 am—Noon
21st North & Ridge Rd, Wichita

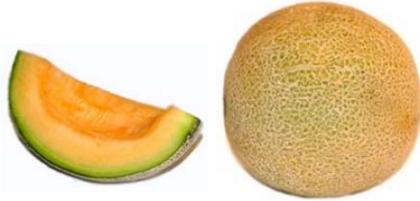
www.kansasgrownfarmersmarket.com

The Food Assistance Program helps individuals with limited income of all ages buy nutritious foods. For more information, contact your local SRS office or call 1-800-221-5689

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In closing, this grant project was successful in providing advertising funding to promote the awareness of the accessibility of the EBT/Debit technology availability at the farmers' market to low-income consumers. Documentation shows a marked increase in the use of the EBT card, therefore, increasing purchases from vendors and increasing vendor income.

The FMPP Grant Project was an exciting and fulfilling endeavor. Thank you FMPP for this opportunity.

Contact Person:

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