

**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.

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| <b>Report Date Range:</b><br><i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i> | September 30, 2015 – September 29, 2015                                |
| <b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>   | Stephen D. Erickson  |
| <b>Authorized Representative Phone:</b>  | (989) 673-2849   |
| <b>Authorized Representative Email:</b>  | <a href="mailto:serickson@tuscolaedc.org">serickson@tuscolaedc.org</a> |
| <b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>  | Tuscola County Economic Development Corporation                        |
| <b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>                               | Thumb Food Hub   |
| <b>Grant Agreement Number:</b><br><i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>                 | 14-LFPPX-MI-0095   |
| <b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>   | 2014   |
| <b>Project City/State:</b>   | Caro, Michigan   |
| <b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>   | \$6,074  |

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: Create a Collaborative Network for Food Hub creation

- a. Progress Made: Early on in the planning process the Tuscola County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) brought together business and community members to form a food hub task force for the creation and development of a food hub in Tuscola County. This group was very successful and helpful in reaching the next step in the creation of a food hub in Tuscola County. With the assistance of the food hub task force and the Tuscola County EDC, the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Corporation was created. This is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation that is committed and dedicated to the creation and development of the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center.

The goal of the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Corporation is to increase the availability of local, healthy, and affordable food products and food related employment in the Greater Thumb Region of Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola Counties. This goal is accomplished with the creation and development of the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center.

The Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center is an economic development project to support small and start-up food entrepreneurs, provide a facility for custom processing of value-added products for small to medium size farmers, offer a distribution center, and provide on-site business planning and development assistance. The Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center will offer a commercial kitchen space for hourly rental, to enable a wide variety of food businesses to start and grow. There will also be a distribution center attached to the commercial kitchen. In addition to the kitchen and distribution center, there will be on-site business planning and development assistance offered by the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Corporation.

- b. Impact on Community: With the creation and development of the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center, this will have a very positive impact on the community. Local food entrepreneurs will now have a facility to process and distribute their products. Community residents will also have local food products available to purchase in local markets.

- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Collaborative Meetings

- a. Progress Made: The Tuscola County EDC and the Food Hub Task Force have held regular monthly meetings, to develop and create a Food Hub in Tuscola County. In addition to the Food Hub Task Force meetings, the Tuscola County EDC has met with and developed relationships with networking partners who will use the Food Hub for their products and/or place the products in their distribution network once it is developed and created.

b. Impact on Community: This portion of the planning project has a very positive impact on the community, as it is an essential component of establishing a Food Hub in Tuscola County.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Create Food Hub Business Plan

a. Progress Made: The Tuscola County EDC with assistance from the Food Hub Task Force have created and developed a business plan for the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center, which will be located in Caro. The plan is comprised of creating and operating an incubator shared use kitchen and a product distribution center. In addition educational classes will be offered which will be centered on taking a raw product from the field to offering it for sale to the public and/or wholesale and retail markets.

b. Impact on Community: The Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center Business Plan has a very positive impact on the community as it is a key and vital component of establishing and creating a Food Hub in Tuscola County.

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, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary. Not applicable
- 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?

Yes, because of the planning efforts, and the creation of a collaborative network of small to medium farmers, food entrepreneurs, distributors, and other business and community members we were able to form the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Corporation. This organization and the Tuscola County EDC now have commitments from 6 sustainable users of the incubator kitchen, as well as commitments from one major state wide distributor and one medium sized organic bean producer.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners?

The Greater Thumb Agri-Business Corporation, Tuscola County Technology Center, Caro Chamber of Commerce, and the Roth Business Development Center.

- ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?

The Greater Thumb Agri-Business Corporation has been an immense help in the total creation and development of the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center in Tuscola County. The Tuscola County Technology Center is a willing partner, and fully supports the creation of the Greater Thumb Agri-business Center. The Caro Chamber of Commerce is also a willing partner, and their Chamber Director is a member of the Food Hub Task Force. The Roth Business Development Center will be the location of the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center, they have agreed to lease space so the incubator kitchen, distribution center, class rooms, and office space for startup food entrepreneurs can be developed and created.

- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant?

Each group, along with the Tuscola County EDC is fully committed to the creation, development, and successful operation of the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? Not applicable
6. Have you publicized any results yet? \* Our publication of the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Plan and the promotional materials stemming from it have not been publicized yet, but will be available by mid to late October.
- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results?
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

\*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?
- i. If so, how did you collect the information?

We collected the feedback from personal interviews with stakeholders. The feedback was also collected through several meetings that the Tuscola County EDC attended throughout the year.

- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

Specific feedback included but is not limited to:

- 'That is fantastic, that the Tuscola County EDC is starting a food hub and that it will meet our needs as a craft food vendor'.
- 'Please, include me as one of your users of the incubator kitchen, I have outgrown my current space and can't afford to expand'.
- 'As a Senior, the incubator kitchen would give me a great way to add to my income'.

- ‘As a produce farmer, the incubator kitchen and distribution center would be ideal for me to process produce that is nearing its shelf life, so I can sell it as a processed product.’

8. Budget Summary:

- 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:
- Did the project generate any income? No
  - If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

9. Lessons Learned:

- 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).

Early on in the planning process, we discovered the greatest need was an incubator kitchen and distribution center for craft food entrepreneurs and small to medium sized organic farmers. The positive lesson learned from this discovery, was to never underestimate the community in which you live. From bringing together key members of our community, we were able to create a business plan for the creation and development of the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center. This is an economic development project to assist and benefit small to medium food entrepreneurs and food producers in the Greater Thumb Region of Michigan.

The negative lesson learned was in the discovery that the small to medium sized farmers had the greatest need in an incubator kitchen and distribution center and not an avenue for selling their produce. When this was discovered, we turned our focus into creating the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center, which would meet the needs of both food and farm producers.

- If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: N/A
- 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 largest lesson learned was to actively communicate with the grant facilitators so that all reports and requests for reimbursement were filled out and submitted correctly.

10. Future Work:

- 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.

We are energized and fully committed to the creation and development of the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center. This facility will be home to Tuscola County's first kitchen incubator, distribution center, and start-up business assistance center centered on local food.

- 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?

Our next steps in the creation and development of the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center is to secure funding for engineering, construction, and equipment. We will also continue to add community partners who like us, are dedicated to the creation and sustainability of the Greater Thumb Agri-Business Center.