

**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; Fax: 202-720-0300

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact LFPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

Report Date Range: (e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)	September 30, 2014 – April 1, 2015
Authorized Representative Name:	Dave Drake, CFO
Authorized Representative Phone:	(231) 922-4805 x231
Authorized Representative Email:	daved@goodwillnmi.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Goodwill Industries of Northern Michigan, Inc.
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Expansion of Farm to Freezer Program
Grant Agreement Number: (e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)	14-LFPPX-MI-0096
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Traverse City, MI
Total Awarded Budget:	\$100,000

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: _____

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0287. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable sex, marital status, or familial status, parental status religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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: Thirty people will complete our training program each
 - a. Progress Made: Thanks to the increased infrastructure provided through this funding opportunity, Farm to Freezer has grown sales, grown awareness, and has created a space and demand to host additional training programs in the 2015 growing season. By the close of this calendar year, 50 people will have been trained through Farm to Freezer and its associated Hospitality Training.
 - b. Impact on Community: Demand for service workers has never been higher in our service area. Food processors, restaurants, and other employers in the local food economy are consistently contacting our agency for placement of trained individuals. This means access to employment opportunities for individuals experiencing barriers to employment that have graduated through our training programs. 75% of trainees earned ServSafe certification.
 - ii. Goal/Objective 2: Increase sales levels to over \$200,000 annually.
 - a. Progress Made: Farm to Freezer hit its capacity in scale, and through this funding initiative was provided an opportunity to grow to meet local demand for local foods frozen fresh. We are currently averaging \$12,000 in sales monthly and will shortly be bringing on a large grocer in southern Michigan that will bring our monthly sales over \$20,000.
 - b. Impact on Community: Brand recognition in the community for Farm to Freezer product is growing greatly. Reports from grocers are that individuals are regularly asking for our products by name, and are excited to bring our products into their homes. The resulting financial impact reaches directly on farm, providing increased financial viability for regional growers. As the program continues to build to meet demand, financial benefit will only increase in our network of farmers.
 - iii. Goal/Objective 3: Increase participating farmers to 13-16 in total.
 - a. Progress Made: Currently, 18 farms participate in the Farm to Freezer program. Growth has happened at an incredible rate, and for the 2015 growing season contracts have been secured with 24 farms.
 - b. Impact on Community: For farmers, Farm to Freezer provides a valuable market for their product. Recently, we were able to negotiate with a local strawberry grower to dedicate an entire field to Farm to Freezer. In negotiations, we were able to secure a higher price per pound (net) than they had received in the past, and through our new infrastructure, we can process the product in a timely fashion. These strawberries are already spoken for on the retail side.
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.

- i. Number of direct jobs created: 2
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: 2
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 15 students graduated, increasing employment options
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: 19
 - v. Number of new markets established: 7
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$11,700 monthly and increased by 536%.
 - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 24
 - a. Percent Increase: 85%
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?
- i. We have been able to expand to service regional Meals on Wheels accounts, serving low income seniors in the region. We have been able to bring on seven additional markets; we plan to add an additional six smaller farm markets this growing season. This strategic direction provides us the opportunity to address rural communities with limited access to transportation.
4. Discuss your community partnerships.
- i. Who are your community partners?

Farm to Freezer relies on many community partnerships in order to move our mission forward. Our leading partners are participating farms, where our beautiful products are grown and harvested. Oleson Food Stores, Tom's Markets, Oryana Natural Food Coop, and Shop and Save Stores all understand the importance of a local food economy, and have committed to helping advance opportunity for local growers. Farm Bureau, Cherry Capital Foods and the Food and Farming Network have each found ways to support and advocate for our product line as a win-win for the local agricultural community.

Local businesses recognize the high level of skills acquired by our students. Our students have been hired by many area employers, including Cherry Capital Foods, Leelanau Schools, Press On Juice, Goodwill Northern Michigan, The Franklin Restaurant, Shorts Brewery, Brady's and Maxbauer Meats. Michigan WORKS! has provided support for job training and placement services

Food Corps has been working to increase student education around Farm to Freezer products, and TCAPS and surrounding school districts have worked with us to increase local food offerings at schools out of season.
 - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?

The community has truly rallied together to help grow Farm to Freezer's reach into the community. The resulting increase in demand for products is what has necessitated the growth in facilities made possible through LFPP. Through Food Corps, we've seen a great and growing interest in unique local foods offered through Farm to Freezer. Growing interest in school aged children has bubbled over into families purchasing products for dinner, with students asking for products specifically, like our frozen romanesco.

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

Farm to Freezer is a part of an emerging food system in Northwest Michigan. As our program grows, we will be increasingly reliant on the relationships that make our food system possible. Farmers are committing more acreage to our program, and our increased demand for wonderful local products doesn't show signs of slowing in the near future.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?

We used local contractors at every level in the build out of our new blast and walk in freezers. We are fortunate to have skilled local companies able to do this work. Grand Traverse Refrigeration, in particular, provided technical assistance well beyond what was required of a contractor. The relationship we have built with them will go a long way in supporting the ongoing maintenance and troubleshooting for this large and unique equipment.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
We've publicized our results in social media and within our local networks, sharing the story of our growing program and impact in the local community.
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results?
Food and Farming Network, Customers, Facebook friends
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? Unknown
*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).

Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?

To date, we have mostly gathered feedback informally via face-to-face conversation. Store owners and frozen food department managers that handle our products have been unanimously positive. All farmers that we purchase from are equally positive and looking forward to this season for us to purchase more product. We are beginning to customer information at this time.

7.
 - i. If so, how did you collect the information?
Farm to Freezer regularly seeks feedback from both retailers and farmers. Information is collected through email, written correspondence, and face to face interactions.
 - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?
Gallagher's Market, a farm market retailer reports great interest in our product. Maria, market manager recently explained "Farm to Freezer is great for farmers and our customers. We want to see more from this product line!" This type of response is being seen across the board. There has not been one instance where a store has put in a SKU, and hasn't re-ordered product. Calvin Lutz, owner of Lutz Farm, reports "Farm to Freezer has provided us with the opportunity to put more seeds in the ground, and has opened up a new market for specialty products that we like to grow. This year, we've committed an entire strawberry patch to the program."

Much of our success is a direct result of the work and skills provided by our students.

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? N/A

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).

One of the items we requested that this grant was \$40,000 for a leased, refrigerated van. By being good stewards of our money, we were able to utilize a vehicle that we already owned. Funds that we saved by doing this allowed us to purchase additional equipment needed by our program, including freezer racks, 15 merchandizing freezers and a forklift. We saved money by buying a used forklift from our budget change and reallocate those saving to purchasing freezer racks.

Farm to Freezer has been a learning experience. We have discovered which products need special attention, which must be processed more timely and which hold the greatest potential for profitability. We have started a new process of packing in bulk bins, then repackaging into two-pound retail bags. This has sped up our processing speed, and reduced waste on packaging, and repackaging various sizes.

Prior to the infrastructure improvement provided through this grant, we were operating at a space much too small for our needs. We knew that shifting to bigger infrastructure would create cost savings, but were unaware at just how much it would save. We've been able to gain efficiencies in this new space that have more than doubled our sales opportunities, without increasing staffing. Rather than moving products back and forth on a daily basis to off site frozen storage (which also produces savings in storage rates) staff have been able to focus on packing out products needed and filling our increasing orders for products.

On the human service side, we have learned incredibly valuable lessons regarding training, placement and management of individuals encountering barriers to employment. Initially, Farm to Freezer staff trained students. The barriers that some of our students face, need more and specialized assistance. We have added a job coach that works with students at work and at home. This support has been critical to their success post-graduation. Trainees and graduates are surveyed prior to their participation in the program, as well as after the program, additional follow-ups are made monthly with each graduate for 6 months.

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

Relationship building has been the most critical component in our advancement of our goals in this program. As we build out the local food system, the growth and success of our work is completely linked to relationships at farms stores and dinner tables throughout the region. To successfully improve relationships, we need to put a procedure in place to systematically gather feedback from our customers – farmers, stores and students.

- 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:

We've found it is more cost effective to custom build specialty pieces (like a blast freezer) rather than order them stock. The freezer size we needed wasn't something that was stocked by any supplier. Shifting to retrofitting an existing piece produced similar results with significant savings.

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.

This infrastructure improvements made through this program have allowed us to double our sales; not until sales double *again*, will we consider additional facilities or equipment, but we do not expect this to be soon. This creates the opportunity for our program to be completely self-sustaining, and carry out the mission of Farm to Freezer well into the future. This next growing season, we will move 50 individuals through our training program, and that will increase to 60 people per year over the next 5 years. Job retention among graduates placed are rapidly growing, and will hit 75% in the next few classes. We are excited to see our graduates succeeding in the local food economy, and are happy to be able to provide these opportunities for a new group of students this next season. In addition to these paid students, Farm to Freezer will add two additional full time positions in the next 3 years.

We have a waiting list of markets interested in carrying our products. We will be brining markets off of this waiting list and growing our sales volume by 4 retailers in the next year.

- 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 are to manage future growth, and start exploring locally sourced and processed protein products. The connection to a regional brand like Farm to Freezer has been an eye opener for many farmers in our community. Now, we will be exploring what

other product categories we can leverage in our movement to grow the local food economy. Local protein is certainly understood to be a need, and some careful planning must take place to understand the viability and potential that exists in this category.

We need to develop a more formalized way to collect and interpret data. In the future we would like to improve our outcome statistics.