

The **Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation** of Springfield, OR received \$33,894 to introduce EBT at 9 new markets in Lane County, OR; facilitate consumer education and access to local foods; and ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of farmers markets in the South Willamette Valley.

[Final Report FY 10](#)

2010 FMPP Final Performance Report

Date: *February 11, 2013*

Recipient Name: *NEDCO (Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation)*

Title of Project: *South Willamette Valley Farmers' Markets Consumer Outreach and New EBT Access Project*

Grant Number: *OR-481-2010-G-1185*

Location: *Springfield, OR*

Project Summary The South Willamette Valley Farmers' Markets Consumer Outreach and New EBT Project was proposed to FMPP out of a desire to make farmers' markets in Lane County, Oregon more accessible for people of all incomes. In order to do this, NEDCO, which ran Springfield Farmers' Market (now part of a regional food hub, Marketplace@Sprout!), along with nine partner farmers' markets conducted an EBT access and consumer outreach campaign. EBT access was provided to 9 farmers' markets throughout the county, and complementing advertising and outreach for 10 markets providing EBT was conducted to make consumers aware of the opportunity to use SNAP benefits at their local farmers' market. Along with EBT terminals and tokens, FMPP also allowed NEDCO to provide on-site training, regular market manager peer networking and problem solving meetings, and a token reconciliation system that included a methodology for recording vendor sales and what portion of sales EBT represented. Aggregating all market data received after the 2011 season, new EBT transactions totaled \$83,256.40, credit/debit transactions totaled \$90,407.46, and overall estimated sales combined totaled \$1,308,967.28 for a combined economic impact of \$2,578,665.54. (using marketumbrella.org's SEED analysis methodology).

Project Approach

The general goals and objectives of the project.

The South Willamette Valley Farmers' Markets Consumer Outreach and New EBT Access Project increased access to farm direct products at farmers' markets for low-income shoppers, developed South Willamette Valley farmers' markets co-branded marketing materials for distribution to increase regional farm direct consumption. In addition, we enhanced the long-term viability of local farmers' markets through improving marketing to boost awareness of and participation in farmers' markets throughout Lane County—including targeted ads to low-income populations to affect consumer behavior toward more localized consumption patterns; and will provided a platform for professional development collaboration for farmers' market managers to ensure viability of farmers' markets in the region.

The strategies that were used to achieve those goals

New EBT: This program activity provided new access to EBT at 8 operating farmers' markets in Lane County including markets in Dexter Lake, Cottage Grove, Veneta, Bethel-Danebo, Creswell, Florence, Junction City and Spencer Creek. NEDCO procured wireless Debit/EBT machines and scrip (wooden tokens), and developed a common EBT system (including operation, reconciliation and accounting, evaluation and data collection procedures) that were adopted by each market. NEDCO provided manager and staff training to all participating markets, and assisted with implementation on-site at each market to aid in establishing the programs.

The EBT programs were operational in time for the 2011 market season and continued through the 2012 season at all continuing markets (Junction City and Bethel-Danebo did not have a 2012 season and their EBT machines were re-directed to new markets in the area).

Farmers' Markets Co-Branded Marketing Campaign: A collaborative marketing campaign was developed to increase awareness of and participation in farmers' markets throughout Lane County. The campaign was focused on promotion of EBT at farmers' markets. This effort was greatly scaled back from the original proposal, as only the EBT component of our proposed work was funded. The advertising and marketing efforts were designed to increase low-income participation at farmers' markets.

The goals and outcomes we addressed in this project are outlined in the table below:

| Outputs | Outcomes | Quantitative Measures | Qualitative Measures |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| New EBT: 8 EBT programs in place in primarily rural locations | Increased access for low-income shoppers throughout the county | Number of EBT transactions: Increase from early to late season Number of consumers who report shopping at farmers' markets because of EBT availability | Consumers report perception of improved access to farm-direct products |
| Co-Branded Marketing: Campaigns: EBT outreach | EBT utilization increases in new and existing programs | Number and dollar amounts of EBT transactions increase | Consumers report a sense of value in local, seasonal shopping |

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

| <i>Outputs</i> | <i>Outcomes</i> | <i>Quantitative Results</i> | <i>Qualitative Results</i> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>New EBT: 8 EBT programs in place in primarily rural locations</i></p> <p>Terminals were placed at all 8 intended markets.</p> | <p><i>Increased access for low-income shoppers throughout the county</i></p> <p>At markets which reported total vendor sales, an average of 6% of sales were realized via EBT in the first year it was available (2011).</p> | <p><i>Number of EBT transactions: Increase from early to late season</i></p> <p>EBT transactions increased during the season as more consumers became aware of availability.</p> <p><i>Number of consumers who report shopping at farmers' markets because of EBT availability</i></p> <p>Market managers collected this information informally and reported that new consumers were attracted to the markets due to EBT availability.</p> | <p><i>Consumers report perception of improved access to farm-direct products</i></p> <p>Informal onsite interviews ascertained that low-income consumers were more likely to purchase local food at a farmers' market when they could use EBT.</p> |
| <p><i>Co-Branded Marketing: Campaigns: EBT outreach</i></p> <p>For the 2011 and 2012 seasons, we placed ads in the Locally Grown Guide and Eugene Weekly, a free paper distributed regionally.</p> | <p><i>EBT utilization increases in new and existing programs</i></p> <p>EBT was not formerly available at 7 of the 8 markets in which new EBT access was provided, and as noted above EBT sales were a significant portion of vendor sales, on average.</p> | <p><i>Number and dollar amounts of EBT transactions increase</i></p> <p>EBT transactions totaled \$83,249.40, credit/debit transactions totaled \$90,319.46, and overall estimated sales combined totaled \$1,308,967.28. The economic impact of this activity, based on marketumbrella.org's SEED methodology was: \$2,578,665.54 in 2011 alone.</p> | <p><i>Consumers report a sense of value in local, seasonal shopping</i></p> <p>Low-income SNAP users who shopped at farmers' markets for the first time reported that prices and selection were better (more affordable and more diverse) than expected.</p> |

Beneficiaries.

Low income customers from the neighborhood who now have better access to wholesome food (6% of market sales came from EBT purchases, on average), Farmers who had an increase in sales (Farmers reported increased sales overall) and Farmers' Markets in the region are stronger because of the interconnection forged through this project, the resources it afforded and the joint advertising relationship developed

Lessons Learned.

- *What worked well:*

Our approach to EBT implementation was well-planned and delivered successfully. Because we were able to deliver a vetted system that included the best practices of wooden token scrip for EBT management as well as a vendor reconciliation system that we developed at Springfield Farmers' Market and perfected during the 2010 season, we were able to provide a comprehensive system for EBT that enhanced market management and data collection overall. We were also able to ascertain a significant economic impact result because of our data collection process and relationships with market managers.

- *What didn't work well and unforeseen challenges*

The main activity of this grant – provision of EBT terminals and management system for 8 farmers' markets in the region appeared to be straightforward and should have been simple. It was anything but! Unfortunately, most of our challenges came from our choice in vendor for the EBT terminals themselves. The vendors we used to procure terminals worked with a sub-vendor to code them, and both companies left much to be desired in terms of quality, service and responsiveness to the multitude of problems we had with the actual terminals. This was frustrating and cause delays and confusing trading and sharing between market managers. It also took a highly unusual amount of NEDCO's staff time to resolve, and not typically the time of program staff who were allocated to the grant. This created additional costs for which we were not able to directly reimburse through the grant, because the activities were not anticipated in the original project plan and because it was difficult to close communication loops regarding budget amendment requests.

- *Were there any unexpected positive results*

While it was not a primary activity of the grant, we found that one of the most valuable aspects of this program was the connections we made between markets throughout the county. Simply gathering market managers regularly to work toward a shared goal provided a deep and lasting set of relationships that enhances the capacity of leaders of markets in the region. Many of the market managers expressed a desire to continue meeting after the FMPP grant period ended, and remain in contact today.

- *"If I had it to do over I would have..."*

If we were to take a project of similar scope with similar goals on again, we would definitely plan for more staff time, would be more diligent about billing to the grant correctly including better communication between the Finance Department and program staff, and would select a higher quality vendor through an RFP process and contract. I would also ensure appropriate

program evaluation by building in more time for NEDCO staff to conduct such evaluation onsite at partner markets rather than relying on market managers to manage the process. Another difference in approach would demand that we outline more specifically up front which party is responsible for the care and upkeep of terminals during the grant period, because this responsibility fell disproportionately on our staff, even though (or more likely because) it was not specifically dealt with up front (mostly because we had no idea we would have so much trouble with the machines).

In all, the FMPP grant was a significant boost to our regional markets. It made a huge difference for low-income consumers who now have access to EBT at all of the major markets, including those in rural areas. It was also a major boon to markets themselves, increasing their ability to reach low-income consumers, creating opportunities to connect with their peers in the area, and benefiting from joint advertising efforts.

Additional Information:

Attached to this email are samples of our advertising placements.

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