FY 2011 The Works, Inc.

$100,000 to The Works, Inc., Memphis, TN, for expanding the functional capacity, availability, and outreach of the South Memphis Farmers Market through the purchase and installation of refrigeration equipment, increased capacity in market management, and development of a market plan.

Final Report

Final Progress Report for USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant

Grant #:	12-25-G-1418
Grant Title:	South Memphis Farmers Market Expansion to Address our Food Desert Project
Project Location:	Memphis, TN
Grantee:	The Works, Inc. 1471 Genesis Circle Memphis, TN 38106 c/o Curtis Thomas 901-946-9675 curtis.thomas@theworkscdc.org

Activities Performed and Milestones

- Operated the 2013 outdoor Market season from May – November during the normal Market season, and hosted special events in December.
- Market Manager continued to manage all aspects of market operations, including: vendor relations/recruitment, organizing and staffing weekly farmers market steering committee meetings, coordinating outreach and marketing activities, managing interns and volunteers, and staffing the outdoor Market on opening days.
- The Program Manager oversaw the second year of University of Memphis's research contract at the Market, as well as use of the first year's data. The first years' research allowed us to develop a clear picture of who were are serving at the Market, why they come, and what we can do to convert more of their peers into shoppers. We also learned a great deal about who *is not* a shopper at the Market, and what changes and education we needed to enact to bring them to the Market as shoppers. Using that research we have done the following:
    - We learned that
        - Where shoppers live:
            - 73% of our regular shoppers are South Memphis residents
            - 65% of shoppers travel to the Market by car
            - 24% walk to the Market

          This led to an increase of marketing efforts to targeted areas of South Memphis where we did not see shoppers coming form (researchers collected location data from shoppers to target these efforts). This was a combination of door-to-door outreach, church bulletin/pulpit announcements through partner churches, and media outreach.
        - How people hear about the Market:
            - 46% word of mouth
            - 18% see it driving/walking by

          We targeted work of mouth outreach through door-to-door outreach efforts and affinity marketing through community churches. We targeted an increase in reaching passersby by increasing signage on

site and temporary signage through the neighborhood to target high visibility areas.

- How shoppers pay:
  - 85% of shoppers pay with cash
  - 32% of shoppers use SNAP benefits at the Market
  - The average shoppers spends $15 per visit

  We have used this data point to guide efforts to increase awareness of the Double Green$ program we offer on site, that matches SNAP purchases up to $10 for the purchase of additional fresh produce. Through this effort we have seen SNAP usage increase at the market to 37% of shoppers.
- How shoppers feel the Market has impacted them:
  - 93% say they save money purchasing produce at SMFM vs. the grocery store, with 76% of shoppers saying they feel the produce is better at the Market, compared to their usual grocery store
  - 93% of shoppers tell us that they eat *more* fruits and vegetables when the Market is in season
- What items would most increase sales to current shoppers:
  - Eggs – 74%
  - Bread – 78%
  - Cheese – 57%
  - Meat/fish/poultry – 50%
  - Milk – 49%

  We have used this guidance from shoppers to select stoke for the interior store and now meet all of those shopping requirements.

- Focus groups surveys of non-shoppers were equally informative. Reasons most cited by non-shoppers for not coming to the Market:
  - Unaware of Market schedule
  - Perception that farmers markets are not for low-income shoppers
  - Perception that they cannot afford the Market's prices
  - Limited food budget leads them to shop for packaged foods they feel last longer

  We have worked to address these concerns in two major ways. First the outreach we conducted door-to-door contained materials related to scheduling, and also to the affordability of the market using SNAP benefits and Double Green$. We also began offering cooking demonstrations/classes that countered the perception that fresh produce would expire too quickly. These sessions also addressed the nutrition and health benefits of those foods.

- Other activities included:
  - Conducted outreach to parents through the Parent-Teacher Association of our neighborhood's K-5 charter school.
  - Pursued media coverage for the Market's expansion, which resulted in newspaper and television coverage that drove attendance gains.

- Produced recipe cards to distribute at the Market that show how to prepare less common items such as white eggplant that shoppers might not otherwise purchase.
- Hosted special events such as the Thanksgiving and Christmas markets, which brought in large numbers of off-season shoppers on days that our farmers would not normally be on site.
- Expanded our Market's participation in the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Voucher Program.

- These marketing efforts resulted in the following outcomes:
  - A year-over-year increase in average attendance at the market of 22%, bringing a typical market day's attendance in 2013 to 450, up from 350 in the 2012 season.
  - The average shopper spent $17.50 per visit during the 2013 season, a 14% increase of the 2012 average of $15.
  - The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Voucher Program drove an average additional 325 shoppers per market day to the Market during the months of July and August, in addition to the 450 average shoppers for those days.

Funding Expended To Date

We have expended all grant funds at this time. We are requesting a final reimbursement of $35,000 as a part of the grant close out.