

## Diversifying Farmers Markets

# New Opportunities for Farmers, Communities and Consumers



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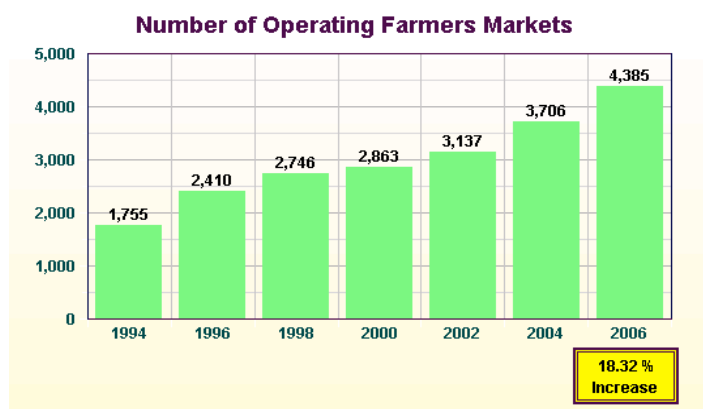


# INTRODUCTION

As has been widely reported, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of farmers markets in the United States in the last ten years from some 1,755 markets in 1994 to 4,385 in 2006. Over three million consumers shop weekly at these markets, where an estimated 30,000 small to mid-sized farm operations and food entrepreneurs earn a partial or full living selling their local products. USDA has projected roughly \$1 billion in annual consumer spending in urban, suburban and rural farmers markets.

This remarkable increase has been made possible because of the groundswell of interest in farmers markets at the community level. Grassroots organizations - churches, downtown associations, chambers of commerce and community food activists -- are increasingly becoming market organizers and/or sponsors, and are expanding to new locations and communities. Today, farmers markets vary in size from a few vendors to many hundred, with management ranging from a vendor-volunteer to a professional management team. Farmers markets are located in economically, ethnically and socially diverse neighborhoods and, increasingly, are gearing their efforts toward improving access to fresh food for all community members. This has included a growing number of farmers markets that accept FMNP coupons and EBT/Food Stamps.

Markets 1994-2006 1



While proliferating, many organizations which sponsor markets lack the resources and support systems to invest in their future and are unable to maximize the many benefits that farmers markets can have on their communities. This is particularly evident in low and moderate-income communities.

Federal and state support to foster innovation and promote capacity for farmers markets has, historically, been minimal. Municipalities, county governments and state agencies lack the understanding of how to work with these emerging non-conventional marketplaces. While there are existing models of communities and states investing in their farmers markets there is little replication of these models by other states and the federal government.

In June, 2005, Project for Public Spaces, a non-profit organization with a long history and experience with building capacity of farmers markets and public markets, received a three year grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to expand the impact that farmers markets have on their communities and to increase their sustainability. Kellogg support allowed PPS to re-grant \$1 million over the next two years. This program built on a parallel effort with the Ford Foundation, under which PPS granted nearly \$2 million, primarily for larger public markets and networks of farmers markets.

## Overview of Grant Program

The goal of this grant program was to strategically support public markets, especially in low to moderate income communities, to become more economically sustainable and community-centered, with a specific focus on farmers markets, which have the potential to improve food access and reduce obesity rates in low-income neighborhoods. The strategic framework under which the entire program operated was based on a funding paradigm that both markets and the communities they serve can benefit from a collaborative approach that brings together the assets and opportu-

nities of markets with the assets and opportunities of communities. In other words, how could public markets broaden the social and economic impacts they have on communities while simultaneously improving their internal economic sustainability? The heart of the paradigm that emerged is a meshing of the operating needs and other goals of the market with its broader impacts on and connections to the surrounding community.



With Kellogg-funded grants, PPS sought proposals from individual farmers markets and regional/state farmers market associations that were seeking to innovate in the following three areas:

**1. Address broader goals and needs of communities.** Grants provided an opportunity for markets to collaborate with organizations and agencies relating to: community and rural development, health and nutrition, neighborhood and downtown interests, local food systems, agriculture, transit, and smart growth, to name a few. These partnerships allowed markets to connect their activities to the broader goals and needs of their communities, while leveraging additional financial support.

**2. Build better places and communities.** Grants enabled markets to become more important community focal points – new civic squares that are stronger draws for customers and which help catalyze revitalization in surrounding areas. While grants were not provided for major capital improvements, small-scale improvements which sought to enhance communities' use of markets and their importance as public gathering places were eligible for support.

**3. Make the market work better.** Grants expanded economic opportunities for farmers and low-income entrepreneurs, especially immigrants, refugees and minorities – while strengthening the ability of boards and staff to more effectively operate, manage and provide long term sustainability for their markets.

The program also focused on investments in low- to moderate-income communities that are experiencing changes related to shifting populations, whether through immigration, gentrification, or market forces related to real estate. Ford Foundation has coined the term “shifting sands communities” to generically describe communities undergoing these dynamic forces of change.

A program advisory committee was set up to guide our work (see Appendix for a list of Advisory Board members). The Advisory Board, reflecting the broad range of work, was composed of a diverse range of people with familiarity with markets as well as with other fields (such as downtown revitalization, health, and agriculture).

Finally, as originally conceived, this grant initiative was not just a program which “writes a check.” We developed a range of capacity building components of the project: convenings, listserves, conference calls, teleconferences, and one-on-one assistance by PPS and experienced peer mentors. These capacity building activities proved to be almost as important as the grants themselves and, as we have discovered, critical to success of the projects. The convenings we held were especially important to expanding the thinking process of the grantees, while allowing the grantees to bond as a group and serve as mentors to each other. The convenings set the stage for all the other activities.

## Grants Awarded

With Kellogg support, PPS made two rounds of grants: the first in 2006 and the second in 2007. In total, 22 grants were awarded. Grantee farmers markets represented significant economic, racial and ethnic diversity. Compared with national averages, most of these farmers markets were located in neighborhoods with higher proportions of poor and non-white residents (see Table 1).

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of grantee farmers markets by ZIP code/neighborhoods

City/State		% Below Poverty Level	% Black or African American	% Asian and Pacific Islander	% Hispanic or Latino	% Urban
Athens	OH	35.40%	3.40%	3.10%	1.20%	74.20%
Brooklyn	NY	36.20%	66.00%	1.10%	34.30%	100.00%
Cincinnati	OH	20.80%	27.40%	2.30%	2.80%	100.00%
Denver	CO	28.50%	4.10%	2.60%	67.00%	100.00%
Fayetteville	AR	19.90%	4.60%	3.00%	4.50%	79.60%
High Springs	FL	10.70%	12.30%	0.40%	3.50%	0.00%
Holyoke	MA	26.40%	4.20%	1.10%	41.00%	96.80%
Jefferson	NC	12.80%	0.90%	0.10%	2.20%	0.00%
Lansing	MI	18.50%	13.80%	3.00%	9.80%	100.00%
Lynchburg	VA	21.70%	60.20%	0.10%	1.20%	74.50%
Lynn	MA	19.40%	13.40%	7.10%	24.10%	100.00%
Madison	WI	41.50%	2.40%	10.30%	3.30%	100.00%

Milwaukee	WI	39.20%	94.60%	1.00%	0.80%	100.00%
Minneapolis	MN	18.40%	22.50%	5.00%	18.70%	100.00%
Mt Vernon	WA	14.60%	0.40%	2.90%	23.80%	77.60%
New Haven	CT	23.40%	44.90%	6.60%	11.50%	100.00%
Oakland	CA	24.50%	23.60%	17.20%	49.30%	100.00%
Prosser	WA	16.30%	0.40%	0.10%	37.50%	48.80%
Richmond	VA	28.80%	44.00%	3.00%	2.20%	100.00%
Takoma	MD	11.50%	36.20%	4.00%	19.80%	100.00%
Toledo	OH	43.10%	41.40%	0.80%	11.40%	100.00%
Webb City	MO	15.00%	0.60%	0.50%	2.80%	88.20%
Mean: All markets		23.94%	23.70%	3.42%	16.94%	83.62%
National average		12.40%	12.20%	3.70%	12.50%	79.00%

## 2006 Grants

In 2006, PPS awarded grants in two categories: small grants for individual markets and larger grants for state associations (the results of the latter are described in a separate report.) With concurrent support from the Ford Foundation, we also awarded seven grants to market networks in metropolitan regions, and we were able to combine this group of grantees with the convenings of state associations.

Twelve grants totaling \$211,000 were awarded in January, 2006; the maximum grant was \$25,000. The timeframe for these grants was for one year, but most grantees received \$5000 extensions for 2007. This extension allowed grantees to work together as a group for an additional year, and to become a resource for the 2007 grantees (they attended one joint convening together) - as well as to provide nominal support to continue their programs developed in 2006.

## 2007 Grants

For 2007, we decided to provide larger grants (up to \$60,000) and, because of the reduced timeframe to yield results, we limited it to markets with a proven track record, having been in operation at least three years. We also sought grantees with at least one significant, strategic partner, rather than a less-defined series of partners. In 2007, we awarded ten grants for a total of \$417,742 to markets with strategic partners ranging from children's museums to food pantries and community development financial institutions.

A brief description of each grant project can be found in the appendix.







# OVERVIEW OF OUTCOMES OF THE GRANT PROGRAM

At the outset of the grants program, we established two overarching questions that framed the work of the grantees, as well as the evaluation of their projects. This report is also structured around these two questions:

- 1. To what extent have small grants helped the sustainability of market participants and management?**
- 2. What are the spin-off benefits of the grants to communities of customers and vendors/farmers? Have the markets been helpful in creating a positive sense of place in a community?**

To answer these questions, we required that grantees collect data that was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Quantitative data compared the operating year prior to receiving the grant with the same data after the one-year grant. 2006 grantees, whose grants were extended one year, also reported on a second year. In addition to the data collection, each grantee was required to collect customer surveys early and late in the market season, as well as vendor surveys. Still, the assessment is preliminary because the impacts of the project may occur well after the PPS grant period ends.

While considerable amounts of useful data were collected and is summarized in this report, data collection was limited by a number of factors. First, customer surveys were generally not done in sufficient quantity to allow a comparison of before-and-after results for each market; rather, this data has been aggregated in this report to provide insight into the overall impacts of all the grantees, collectively, and the types of customers that are being reached. Second, vendor surveys were also not completed in sufficient numbers to provide useful data, except perhaps for the individual grantee. The most useful body of information came from data about markets' sales, revenues, and other statistics collected along with grantee narrative reports which described the overall program goals and

impacts. PPS followed up these reports with selected grantees to create the case studies presented in this report. In a few cases, grantees failed to provide useful data, aside from their qualitative reports. One of the lessons learned from this experience is that farmers markets need to become more rigorous in monitoring their progress on an annual basis, and the PPS grant requirements should not be considered as exceptional or extraordinary in any way.

Below is a summary of the results of the grants, according to our two overarching questions. The report provides more extensive detail into these questions, along with case studies of specific markets.

## **To what extent have small grants helped the sustainability of market participants and management?**

By and large, most grantees increased the sustainability of their markets as measured in several ways.

- *Market sales:* of the markets that tracked vendor sales, the average increase in sales was 15% for 2006 grantees and 22% for 2007 grantees, comparing the year prior to the grant year with the grant year itself. Interesting, 2006 grantees experienced a slight decline in sales the year after the grant (about 3%), although some continued to experience solid increases. This included 66% increases over two years for the farmers market in Lynn, MA; 35% in Prosser, WA; and 23% in Mount Vernon, WA.
- *Market operating revenues:* this was measured with 2006 grantees in the year after their grant, so as not to include the grant itself. Overall, markets increased revenues, on average, by 47%, comparing the year before the grant with the year after the grant. This represents a substantial increase in revenues, demonstrating the grantees' increased capacity to operate their markets more efficiently, as well as to partner with other outside funders.
- *EBT/FMNP:* Electronic Benefit Transfers (EBT) (food stamps), Women, Infant, and Children (WIC)

Farmers Market Nutrition Program coupons, and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) are very important to the sustainability of markets serving low-income populations. Under the FMNP program, WIC and senior participants receive coupons (of about \$10-20 per year) which can only be redeemed at farmers markets. Food Stamps were once a large source of market revenues, a source which decreased dramatically with the development of the EBT debit card. Of the 2006 grantees that had WIC sales prior to the PPS grant, there was a 38% increase in sales in one year; and 6% for 2007 grantees. In terms of EBT, most markets developed the capacity to use EBT during their grant; those markets with specific marketing programs and strong partnerships had the highest EBT sales. Still, the dollar amounts of EBT sales are very low.

This report outlines, in more detail, how markets increased their sustainability, and provides a few in-depth case studies of markets that were particularly noteworthy in this regard. Interestingly, we discovered that the greatest impact that these grants provided were the resources for markets to hire a manager and/or staff to run the market, or expand the time that a manager had to devote to the market. Single-handedly, this has done the most to help the sustainability of the market participants and management. With funding, management had the time and opportunity to undertake the following key activities:

- *Marketing.* All grantees utilized traditional media advertising campaigns as a way of getting out the word about their markets. The funding allowed for the development of marketing strategies and materials and the provision of capacity building activities related to marketing. Market management was able to offer training, advice and assistance in improving the vendors' capacity to better market their products, and to improve the whole market image, thus better promoting the market to the community. This included one-time purchases, materials such as tables, chairs, tents, banners, cooking demonstration equipment, EBT technology, educational and promotional materials (hats, t-shirts, shopping bags) – all of which assisted in

further establishing the permanence of the market in the eyes of the community. In addition to increasing the overall customer draw to these markets, an objective for many of the PPS/Kellogg grantees was to use marketing as a way to increase the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of the customers and vendors who bought and sold at the markets -- thus increasing traffic and revenue at the market, and increasing access to culturally specific food to a diverse community.

- *Partnerships.* One of the key goals of this grant program was for markets to develop strong and lasting partnerships with other stakeholders and institutions throughout the community. With additional paid hours devoted to the market and the grant program's capacity building experiences, market managers have been better able to seek out these opportunities and feel more skilled and confident in doing so. These partnerships increased sustainability of markets through such things as:

- > Paid advertising or co-promotions (advertising farmers markets and FMNP at local WIC offices for example);

- > Special events which increased the number of people and sales at the market (cooking demonstrations, radio broadcasts, blood pressure screenings, children's activities);

- > New and/or different transportation routes, market locations, traffic pattern changes during market hours, and police presence through public/community government partnerships which brought more people to the market; and

- > Fundraising events and private or public organizations providing tents, tables, banners or financial contributions, which brought new fundraising opportunities, sponsors, and significant donation opportunities.

- *Market Governance, Management, Fee Structure, and Business Planning.* In an effort to ensure the future success of markets, grantees were encouraged to evaluate their market governance structure; rethink vendor fees; and create a business plan that would help ensure

the market's sustainability for years to come. For many grantees, this led to the establishment of, or an increase in, a vendor fee structure that provides for long-term sustainability; the establishment or formalization of a Board of Directors or Board Committee to oversee the future of the market; and the development of a sustainable management structure. The grant funding also allowed management to participate in a wide range of capacity building and educational experiences that were brought back to the market, including convening meetings, teleconferences, and state and regional training opportunities for management staff and vendors. In addition, advice from a mentor allowed markets to have input from an outside "expert" for the first time. And, finally, for some markets, grant funding allowed management to prepare strategic business plans.

- *EBT and FMNP.* Electronic Benefit Transfers for Food Stamps (EBT), Women Infant and Children (WIC) Farmers Market Nutrition Program coupons and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program coupons (SFMNP) all provide different sources of revenue that improve the long-term sustainability of farmers markets. By accepting these forms of payment, farmers markets tap into a larger market and widen access to fresh food. For example, with grant support, nine grantees have been able to establish EBT, as well as train vendors and staff on its use for the first time. Partnerships and marketing also allowed grantees to promote the availability of FMNP and EBT, and thereby increase sales.

**What are the spin-off benefits of the grants to communities of customers and vendors/farmers? Are these markets being helpful in creating a positive sense of place in communities?**

The increased sustainability of grantee markets did not occur in isolation. As can be seen from the broad range of activities that grantees were engaged in, the projects produced positive financial results in large part because of the strategic efforts to enhance the spin-off benefits and the market's "sense of place" in

the community. One particularly striking example of this connection was from a Ford-funded market in Wenatchee, Washington. This market, located in a low-income Latino neighborhood, doubled its annual sales (from \$11,000 to \$22,000) primarily by using their grant to hire a Spanish-speaking neighborhood manager who organized a wide range of community events at the market. Not only did these events animate an otherwise gang-ridden park, they acted as a magnet for market customers.

While grantees were engaged in a wide variety of programs – yielding a similar broad range of spin-off benefits – in this report we focus on four key areas of impact:

- *The Benefits of Placemaking: Transforming, Revitalizing, and Re-Centering Communities.* Placemaking efforts were initiated to varying degrees by all of the grantees, each participating in training provided by PPS at grantee convenings. Because of the unique community and environmental contexts of the individual markets, these efforts ranged in form and strategy. Whereas some markets incorporated physical improvements and design considerations into their placemaking agendas, others focused their attention on the creation of welcoming, safe, social environment that reflected the great diversity of the neighborhoods where their markets were located. Others sought to use their market as an impetus to ignite more widespread neighborhood and community revitalization; still others interpreted placemaking as an avenue for capacity building and resident empowerment. Regardless of the specific plan of action, however, all of the grantees recognized the value of placemaking as an effort to transform their market into something greater than simply a place to buy fresh produce and local foods.

- *Multiculturalism and Social Diversity.* Many cities and towns across the country – including those where grantees' markets are operating – are experiencing notable demographic shifts, particularly as various Asian and Latino/Hispanic groups move to the United

States and establish new families and communities. Farmers markets have the potential to be the most socially diverse public places in a community, bringing people of different ages, genders, races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds together around the experiences of food, shopping, music, and conversation. Grantees developed strategies to create spaces of inclusion, vis-à-vis increasing market access for low and moderate income and non-English speaking individuals and families; providing products and recruiting new growers/vendors to more accurately reflect the demographics of the community; and transforming the market spaces into places where cultural barriers are dissolved, marginalized residents are empowered, and differences are celebrated.

- *Youth Development.* As community-based establishments, farmers markets often provide spaces for youth development. They offer an opportunity for youth to interact with other community members, learn about healthy eating, explore their talents, and learn entrepreneurial skills. Grantees employed a wide spectrum of approaches to youth development, from one-day family festivals to year-long internship programs. In general, they approach youth development in two ways. Some created educational events that familiarized children with healthy eating habits and introduced them to new types of food. Others used the markets as a space to build youth's leadership and entrepreneurial skills, including growing and selling produce at the market. Young growers learned new skills, how to work with others, and to take pride in their work.

- *Food Access and Healthy Living.* Farmers markets perform the much-needed function of providing communities with a source of fresh food. Several grantee markets operate in "food deserts" where stores do not carry fresh fruits and vegetables or there are no grocery stores. In addition to providing access, many of our grantees' markets also provided necessary education about the benefits of healthy eating and living. For example, there was a 76% increase in the number of healthy living events, such as cooking demonstrations,

nutrition education, and child and adult health screenings, held at the grantee markets over the course of the grant cycle. Being located in distressed areas is not the only way in which grantees have increased access to fresh food. Allowing for the use of alternative forms of payment – particularly EBT and WIC --broadens food options for low-income residents. Finally, to promote their products and encourage healthy living, many grantees educated community members about the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables, often in partnership with other local health advocates. All of these efforts combined, according to the customer surveys, have led 61% of our grantees' customers to report that they are eating more fruits and vegetables because of the farmers market.





# GRANTEE OUTCOMES AND CASE STUDIES:

## Creating Economically Sustainable Markets

Through just a small amount of funding markets were able to increase the sustainability of participants and management. Many markets used a portion of the grant funding to go towards paying a market manager, and this proved to have the greatest overall impact on their project's success. A dedicated, paid manager meant not only more time for day-to-day operational issues, but also marketing, partnership, market governance, and EBT/FMNP programs. As the following section and case studies detail, this multifaceted operational approach yielded greater sustainability for management and participants alike.

### Marketing

A critical component to any successful farmers market is its marketing strategy, although it is difficult to measure the precise impact of any one strategy. In addition to increasing the overall customer draw to these markets, an objective for many of the PPS/Kellogg grantees was to use marketing as a way to increase the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of the customers and vendors who bought and sold at the markets. To this end, grantees embarked on marketing campaigns that incorporated traditional techniques, such as word of mouth, print, and radio advertising, with new, more innovative strategies, including branding campaigns, the development of websites, email list serves, and multilingual advertisements. In addition to their advertising strategies, participatory events—such as festivals, cooking demonstrations, school programs, and vendor training programs - served to promote the markets within the grantees' respective communities, and contributed to overall increases in customer draw and patron/vendor diversity.

All grantees utilized traditional media advertising campaigns as a way of getting out the word about their markets. The Toledo Farmers Market in Toledo, OH, hired a graphic design intern to produce a line of high quality posters advertising their new winter market, as well as seasonal events and programs, while the Crossroads Farmers Market in Hyattsville, MD, placed door

hangers in the low income neighborhoods they had targeted for outreach. At the East New York Farms!, Brooklyn, NY, advertisements and educational materials were printed in five languages, and, although all grantees attracted press coverage, a handful of markets, including Findlay Market in Cincinnati, OH, and Webb City in Missouri, realized the cost-saving benefits of attracting press coverage, writing and distributing press releases on a weekly or monthly basis to local media outlets and public officials. These initiatives are only a small selection of the print-related initiatives our grantees executed to promote their markets. Many of the



grantees also launched radio and television advertising initiatives. Both Fondy Farmers Market, Milwaukee, WI, and the Athens Farmers Markets, Athens, OH, received coverage from their local National Public Radio station, while the Crossroads Farmers Market advertised with El Zol, the “most widely listened to radio station by Latino consumers” in their region. In an effort to increase visibility among a far-reaching audience, Webb City, the Lynn Farmers Market, Lynn, MA, East New York Farms!, Prosser Farmers Market, Findlay Farmers Market, and Athens Farmers Market were featured on either the local news or public access channels.

The internet provided a marketing avenue for many of our grantees, as well. Prosser Farmers Market's internet strategy, for example, involved a combination of a website, email newsletter, and blog. Added-value prod-

ucts were another marketing avenue. At the Fairview Youth Farmers Market in Denver, CO, for example, designs for t-shirts and mugs were solicited from youth participants, and the products were sold at the market and given to program sponsors as thanks for supporting the youth market initiative. Many of the grantees combined new technologies with the most basic form of advertising: word-of-mouth. Market managers from Holyoke, Denver, Toledo, Brooklyn, and Mount Vernon, WA all discussed the significance of customer networks and the power that word of mouth has in contributing to their market's economic and social success. Market organizers with East New York Farms! calls this informal advertising "Feet on the Street," and argue that it is one of the most critical components to their successful multigenerational and ethnically diverse movement to promote locally grown and healthy food in Brooklyn.

Finally, the participatory events that grant recipients hosted provided marketing outlets that contributed to increases in both customer draw and the diversity of patrons and vendors. In Fayetteville, AR, Salsa Fest brought upwards of 5,000 people to the market over the course of a weekend, many of whom were Latino or Hispanic (a population that was traditionally under-represented and which organizers had hoped to attract to the market). Cooking demonstrations held by the Denver, Webb City, Crossroads, and Fondy farmers markets encouraged local residents to share culturally-specific recipes and techniques with their neighbors, which in the words of Webb City manager Eileen Nichols was seen as a successful marketing strategy because the classes attracted new residents from the Hmong community to the market in addition to showing non-Hmong patrons how to cook with unfamiliar produce. Denver and New Haven's concentration on youth brought parents from a wide range of cultural backgrounds to the marketplaces.





**Case Studies:**  
**Toledo Farmers Market: Strengthening Our Market for the Next 175 Years**  
*Toledo, Ohio*



The Toledo Farmers Market has long been a source of locally grown, healthy food for the Toledo community. Established in 1832, the market has felt the impacts of demographic and economic shifts in the community over the last 175 years. Located in a “shifting sands” community that continues to face municipal fiscal hardships, the market suffered a sustained period of economic disinvestment over the past few decades. Recently, however, the Toledo Farmers Market has been the subject of significant revitalization efforts, including a \$70,000 Housing and Urban Development grant. While this investment is certainly a step in the right direction, staff and organizers continue to be faced with the great challenge of promoting the market as “an appealing place” that offers “appealing products” when much of the rest of the neighborhood continues to suffer economic decline. This challenge is compounded by the fact that the Erie Street Market, a city-owned indoor market that abuts Toledo’s space, has recently downsized because of financial problems, creating an impression that the farmers market had downsized as well.

In an effort to promote the market as a great community destination, organizers have embarked on an aggressive marketing campaign aimed at both attracting new shoppers and retaining longtime patrons. Through their work with the USDA Community Food Project, they identified food stamp recipients as one of the most underrepresented groups at the Toledo Farmers Market. In order to increase this group’s utilization of the market, a strategic advertising partnership was developed between the market and County Jobs and Family Services. Furthermore, advertising campaigns were launched in partnership with the Lucas Metropolitan Housing Agency and the Toledo Area Regional Transportation Authority in order to increase patronage among residents living

in the four public housing developments located in the neighborhood.

According to Project Leader Dan Madigan, the majority of advertising and marketing efforts are directed at the market’s core shoppers. “Why spend so much money on mass advertising,” Madigan asked, “when you can dedicate your resources to people you know will patronize the market?” Although some resources were dedicated to traditional print advertisements, less costly market tools, oriented to existing shoppers were used, including a newsletter emailed to regular patrons and flyers advertising the various community and special events sponsored throughout the market season, such as food and health education programs, seasonal markets, and holidays. Toledo’s mentor, Donita Anderson, helped organizers strategize on other ways to attract customers, such as increasing the variety of products at the market, working with vendors to better reflect what customers want and expect in terms of goods, and programming the market with additional events, such as cooking demonstrations, music and entertainment. These efforts, combined with offering placemaking elements such as shaded seating areas, were ways to keep customers coming back without having to spend a huge portion of the market’s operating budget on advertising. As a result of these changes, the Toledo Farmers Market’s sales rose by 10% or \$100,000; they added six market days and four new vendors; FMNP sales rose by \$1000 and market operating revenue is up by \$2150 over last year.



## Webb City Farmers' Market: Building Sustainability and Community at the Webb City Farmers' Market

*Webb City, Missouri*

When the Webb City Farmers' Market began in 2000, it averaged one grower, one honey producer, and one baker per market day. Only two years later, the market had become so successful that it was the recipient of the Market of the Year Award, an honor bestowed by the Missouri Department of Agriculture. By 2007, the



market had grown even larger, encompassing as many as thirty vendors and serving upwards of 1,000 customers per market day. One of the major factors contributing to this growth has been Webb City's marketing program, a multifaceted strategy combining traditional techniques such as print, radio, and television advertising with vendor and grower training programs intended to increase both the overall capacity of market participants and increase the supply of goods in order to meet an ever-increasing demand for market products. Additionally, cultural festivals and tours were organized as a way to increase the market's visibility and transform its function in people's minds from merely a place to buy and sell fruits and vegetables, into a vibrant community destination.

Another goal of Webb City was to use grant funding to help them implement an EBT and Debit/Credit card system and to advertise the new program. Through advertising partnerships with several local social service organizations, including the Missouri Family Support Division, Crosslines (a regional food and clothing pantry), the Salvation Army, Lafayette House (a regional domestic violence facility), and Economic Security, Webb City promoted their new EBT program among low income residents. As with many markets offering EBT for the first market season, sales were \$1211, lower than anticipated. However, Webb City was the first farmers market in Missouri to accept EBT and is being held up as a model, and has been asked to serve as a mentor to 19 additional markets interested in establishing EBT throughout the state. One aspect of

the market's advertising strategy that sets them apart from other grantees is the way they maximized local press coverage to promote market activities. According to Nichols, "unless you can get regular visibility, people will forget that you're there." To this end, market organizers have worked hard to develop an "excellent relationship with local media" which has resulted in weekly updates in both the local and regional newspapers, the provision of space for a weekly column in the local paper, and "drastically" reduced advertising rates. One market manager also appears on a local cooking television show, and several news stations provide on-site broadcasting throughout the market season. Nichols and others are quick to communicate their successes (such as being chosen for a PPS grant) to the local media, who respond by highlighting the market's achievements through a number of media venues. Finally, the market maintains a website and blog that is updated



regularly to reflect current programs and events. One of the less traditional marketing strategies in Webb City has been their attention to vendor and grower capacity- building and trainings. One of the challenges for this market has not been to increase overall demand (although this is also a priority), but rather to ensure that supply is adequate to meet the demand that already exists. Market staff realized that the farmers and gardeners supplying the market were not realizing their full production potential due to a lack of knowledge about local/regional growing techniques and business strategies. To address this issue, Webb City implemented a series of training workshops focused on growing techniques, soil improvement, pest control, and safe food handling. These trainings, which targeted the market's Hmong vendors and utilized a translator to help lessen communication barriers, were very popular and played a key role in increasing the production of vegetables. The Webb City Farmers Market's marketing techniques reflect a growing recognition that traditional advertising alone will not create a successful market. Rather, these strategies must be combined with programming, training, and other culturally-specific initiatives. This comprehensive approach resulted in increased revenue for growers, which increased by 60% in one year, and specifically for Hmong vendors, all of whom experienced significant increases in sales, ranging from 200% to 700% more revenue than they had earned the previous year.



## Partnerships

One of the key goals of this grant program was for markets to develop strong and lasting partnerships with other stakeholders and institutions throughout the community. To quote the Fayetteville Farmers Market (Fayetteville, AR) grantee's final report, "Building partnerships requires more time and thought from market management, but the benefits are great." Grantees reached out to a variety of partners, including community-based nonprofits, local public officials, state, county, and local social services agencies, fellow farmers markets, farmers associations, economic development entities, and educational institutions. The outcomes of these relationships included lasting benefits, such as the development of social capital and community networks; the dissemination of knowledge, information, and "best practices"; and sustainable economic development, both for the markets, and in some cases, for the neighborhoods surrounding them. Forming partnerships with other local community-based organizations (CBOs) was an important task for the grantees. Overall, there was great diversity in terms of the different types of CBOs with whom grantees partnered. Food-related organizations were a popular choice: Slow Food partnered with three of the markets, and four others partnered with local organic food co-operatives in their communities as ways to share knowledge about the benefits of organic, locally produced food. In Milwaukee, WI, the Fondy Farmers Market partnered with local food pantries to educate low-income residents about affordable, healthy food options at the market and help address what they considered to be an overdependence of poor residents on charitable organizations.

In part because of the partnership-building requirements that PPS mandated for its grantees, a number of the markets who received funding have begun collaborating with other farmers markets in their respective regions and states to share best practices. East New York Farms! for example, is a member and leader in the Just Food City's Farm Network as well as the recently-formed Brooklyn's Bounty, a network of food and ag-

ricultural organizations whose mission it is to increase the production of locally-grown and healthy food in the borough. Similarly, organizers of the Webb City Farmers Market in Webb City, MO, have been asked by the state's Agriculture Department to serve as a mentor to other markets implementing EBT systems. All of the project managers interviewed for the case studies in this report discussed the importance of having the regular PPS conference calls and grantees meetings because these events provided the space for market and program managers to share strategies, ideas, and challenges.



The grantees worked hard to establish connections with neighboring community based advocacy organizations. The range of these partnerships were broad, and included local arts councils, community development corporations, alternative transportation groups, children's museums, neighborhood associations, faith-based organizations, ethnic organizations, and community health projects. The breadth of these collaborations reflects an increasing understanding that the types of social goals our grantees are working toward—including local economic development, community empowerment and civic engagement, and public health—are most effectively tackled through a multidisciplinary, participatory approach to program development and evaluation. The farmers market gives these organizations a venue to promote their

missions in an accessible location and within a friendly, social context. For example, both Mount Vernon Farmers Market, and the Allen Street Market in Lansing, MI, formed strong relationships with their county health departments to help identify public health challenges in their respective communities and develop educational programs to help overcome these barriers. In another case, the markets expand the impact of a program. For example, City Seed, in New Haven, CT, partnered with the CT Children's Museum to expand on the museum's early childhood reading program to include a specific focus on healthy eating, farmers markets and agriculture.

Local, county, and state social service agencies were another natural group of partners for our grantees. Crossroads Farmers Market partnered with their local WIC office to promote shopping and coupon redemption at the market; several other grantees developed similar marketing collaborations with their local WIC facility. The Athens Farmers Market found meaningful market promotion partnerships with both the Athens County Jobs and Family Services (ACJFS) and the Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority (AMHA).

Markets also reached out to local politicians. For example, in Athens, market staff was fortunate to establish connections with a group of newly elected council members who had campaigned on a platform of smart growth, as well as the mayor, who is a regular shopper and ran a campaign booth at the market during the election season. Similarly, Takoma Park's mayor has become a regular shopper at the Crossroads market, and the market has a relationship with many members of the city council. Staff at East New York Farms! have partnered with members of Community Board 5, South Madison, WI, collaborates with the South Metropolitan Planning Council, and Ashe County Farmers Market, Jefferson, NC, has teamed up with the Town of West Jefferson to address utilities issues. In Lynn, MA, the Food Project has partnered with the Office of Economic and Community Development to negotiate a permanent space for the market with the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA). Relationships have

been built with other stakeholders from the economic development arena, such as Prosser's work with the Chamber of Tourism and Fayetteville's involvement with the Fayetteville Downtown Partners.

In its final report, East New York Farms! poignantly described the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in achieving community revitalization goals: "When clear partnerships are formed between governmental and nonprofit organizations, and youth and adults residents, struggling communities can start to shift on a social and environmental level. This shift can create a subtle and profound impact on growth of a low-income community."

## Case Studies:

### Fondy Farmers Market: Growing Community Project

*Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

Fondy Farmers Market is Milwaukee's largest open air market, serving as many as 2,000 customers per week from five neighborhoods in the Near North Side. Over the past forty years, these five neighborhoods have experienced dramatic demographic shifts: poverty and unemployment rates have skyrocketed, while total population and real income have drastically declined. Recognizing that a number of economic and cultural barriers inhibit the community's most vulnerable residents from shopping at the market and accessing healthy, local food, Fondy Food Center, Inc. (FFC), the organizing sponsor of the market, applied for funding from PPS/Kellogg in order to achieve three primary goals. First, in an effort to disable the "institutionalizing [of] hunger," Fondy aimed to attract residents who had been relying on local food pantries to come to the farmers market. Second, in order to create additional economic opportunities for the most disenfranchised community residents, organizers set a goal of recruiting between two and three new, non-traditional vendors to sell products on market days. Finally, in an effort to keep residents informed about events and programs, and other opportunities hosted by the market, the market decided to hire a local resident to write and publish a bi-monthly newsletter.

All three of these objectives were achieved with the support of neighboring organizations, funders, and residents in the community. Realizing that "any system-changing effort that does not have true community buy-in is destined to fail," Executive Director Young Kim established strategic and collaborative relationships with several community stakeholders. An overarching partnership between the Greater Johnsons Park Health Coalition (an advocacy group representing twenty local community-based organizations, educational institutions, and service agencies, including FCC) and the farmers market allowed organizers to address many of the economic and social barriers they saw getting in the way of residents accessing the market. For example, through this partnership (as well as partnerships with a handful of local philanthropists), Fondy was able to leverage resources to organize cooking demonstrations, produce welcome packets for new shoppers, and offer economic incentive programs such as Veggie Vouchers and a discounted cookware program to low-income residents. Cooking demos were hosted at the local Salvation Army's food pantry, and vouchers were distributed there, as well. The "learn-do-teach" empowerment model that this partnership utilized proved to be popular: cooking demonstrations at the food pantry came to be hosted by local residents, and the cookware voucher program saw nearly a 90% redemption rate.

In order to recruit and help create economic opportunities for non-traditional vendors, partnerships between Fondy and two local organizations—Return into Mainstream Ministries (RIMM) and the Walnut Way Conservation Corporation—were established. RIMM is an organization dedicated to reintegrating formerly incarcerated and/or homeless women into society, while Walnut Way focuses on promoting environmental sustainability. Because of RIMM's capacity issues, including a lack of staff, FFC's partnership with RIMM was not as successful as Walnut Way's. A strong relationship has developed between Walnut Way and FFC: Walnut Way's Gardens to Market Youth Corps has helped supply local produce to the market and FFC recently relocated to a building rehabilitated by Walnut Way. According to Kim, this move was both pragmatic and symbolic: "We are now surrounded by gardens that are producing food for our market, and our presence here underscores the collaborative efforts that the Fondy Food Center is making in the neighborhood."

The project's third goal—keeping the community informed through a regularly-published newsletter— was also realized. The organization was able to recruit a neighborhood resident to write the newsletter, and the first issue was distributed to over 1,000 people who had previously shopped at the market. Currently, Fondy is working on strategies for tracking the impact of the newsletter.



Fondy's strategy has been to create complementary rather than competitive relationships within the community Near North Side in order to promote health and wellbeing among the region's most socioeconomically marginalized residents. In his final report, Kim spoke about a number of new relationships that have been cultivated over the past year and that will contribute to an even more just and sustainable program in the future. No longer just another organization with a mission to "fix" economic problems in the community, Fondy is now viewed as a community partner committed to collaboration and relationship-building.



**City Farmers' Markets (CitySeed, Inc): Farmers' Market Foods Infusion Project: Connecting City Farmers' Markets & New Haven Families through a Literacy-Based Preschool Curriculum**

*New Haven, Connecticut*

When asked how partnership building had contributed to the success of the Farmers Market Food Infusion Project, CitySeed staff member Nicole Berube responded matter-of-factly: "collaboration is key to everything we do." Described as a "multilayered, multigenerational effort to improve the health and wellbeing of children" through increased food security, the Food Infusion Project itself was conceptualized as an "innovative partnership" between CitySeed and the Connecticut Children's Museum (CCM), intended to promote the City Farmers Markets' network, encourage healthy eating, and increase literacy among preschoolers in New Haven. Unlike many of the other grantees who used their funding to improve the physical spaces of their markets, the Farmers Market Food Infusion project was primarily an effort to bring information about CitySeeds' City Farmers Markets and healthy eating to children and their families in order to promote the farmers markets as places to shop for healthy, affordable, and locally grown food. To these ends, a collaborative education and market incentive program was initiated between CitySeed, the Children's Museum, the New Haven School Readiness Council (SRC), and All Our Kin, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering parents and teachers and improving early educational opportunities for children across New Haven.



The two main collaborators—CitySeed and the Connecticut Children's Museum (CCM)—recognized the potential for using the museum's local connections to reach out to children and their parents, and to encourage them to shop at the farmers markets. CCM is a leader in the education and youth development arena in New Haven, engaging upwards of 6,000 children annually through a variety of community-based programs and activities. And while CitySeed expected that teaming up with the museum would "make a mark on the community," they never expected to

have as great an impact as they did. Over the course of the grant cycle, their collaboration was able to directly engage more than 500 preschoolers and their families with the Food Infusion Project. In total, twenty-two SRC classrooms and All Our Kin childcare groups were the recipients of a three-day in-class curriculum; ten educational/ interactive field trips to the farmers markets were organized for students; and the "Saturdays at 2" program, a weekly event that included a variety of family-oriented educational and social programs and events at the CCM, were organized as ways to attract new families to the farmers markets.



In order to evaluate how successful the partnership had been at increasing attendance among the targeted children and families, an advertising and coupon program was launched. Over 5,000 seasonal, monthly postcards advertising "Saturdays at 2" were distributed in SRC and All Our Kin classrooms; postcards were also handed out in local libraries and New Haven's WIC offices as ways to reach out beyond the targeted audience. Five dollar coupons were distributed to 404 children, 60 teachers and 119 families at "Saturdays at 2" events. In total, 274 of these coupons were cashed in, amounting to a 31% percent initial redemption rate, higher than their targeted 25% redemption rate. A further indicator that these families were attracted to the market was that more than half (52%) of the individuals who redeemed their initial coupon also redeemed a second one that they were given on their first visit to the market. Moreover, the highest redemption rates occurred during the pre-school field trips, which signified that the partnership's goal of increasing awareness of healthy eating and promoting the market among young children was being realized.

According to Berube, the success of the Farmers Market Food Infusion Project collaboration has created a "jumping off point for larger conversations about food security" and has proven that a participatory, multidimensional approach to food insecurity issues is the most effective way to create positive and lasting change, both in New Haven and beyond.

## **Market Governance, Management, Fee Structure, and Business Planning**

In an effort to ensure the future success of markets, grantees were encouraged to evaluate their market governance structure; rethink vendor fees; and create a business plan that would help ensure the market's sustainability for years to come. While social goals are important, if a market is not economically sustainable then those social goals become very difficult to achieve.



Reflecting the diversity of the grantees, markets took different approaches to enhance the economic sustainability of their organization. Several inter-related trends and lessons became clear. First, to be successful, markets need a paid manager who can handle marketing and promotion, recruitment and diversification of vendors, and organization and finances; these activities, if properly managed, can in fact substantially increase the income of market vendors. Second, the main source of revenues for market sponsors are stall fees, so that charging little or no rent – essentially making the management a “volunteer” position – is ultimately self-defeating and limits the potential for the growth of the market. Third, markets can benefit from a community-encompassing board of directors that can, in turn, provide connections to other financial support for the market.

Before working with Project for Public Spaces, many of the markets were managed by volunteers or vendors who had been part of the market for years. While these volunteers and vendors often performed their duties satisfactorily, assigning responsibilities to a paid manager resulted in greater economic success for a number of markets, specifically Ashe County Farmers Market and Webb City Farmers Market. Managers were typically in charge of facilitating communication among vendors, collecting fees, designing marketing campaigns, maintaining the aesthetics and physical layout of the markets, recruiting vendors and volunteers, and keeping track of the markets' finances. They also served as the face of the market in front of community stakeholders and members of the media. Their work established a more business-like relationship between vendors and the community. An improvement in the appearance of markets and marketing resulted in a greater number of customer visits. Recruitment efforts diversified the pool of vendors and brought in volunteers that increased the organizational capacity of the market. Building relationships galvanized support from municipal officials and promoted effective word-of-mouth advertising. Overall, managers established greater organization within the market and lent it greater credibility in the eyes of both vendors and community members. A good example of this occurred at Ashe County Farmers Market where vendors and community officials were initially resistant to hiring a manager, not believing it would increase their revenue. By the end of the season, the vendors voted to give the manager a bonus to reflect their support and the added income they received due to her organizational and marketing efforts.

Fee restructuring has been a very positive if often painful step for the grant recipients. Many of the farmers markets previously charged vendor fees that were inadequate in providing funds for marketing and managing activities beyond basic upkeep of the market. During the life of their grant, market leaders restructured fees in order to grow the markets' coffers. They raised per-day and season-long fees; restructured fees



as a percentage of a vendor's revenues, or used a combination of both, often opting for whatever approach yielded higher stall revenues. In some cases, market managers encountered resistance from vendors but were able to explain the need for fee increases to create better markets, and were able to demonstrate the benefits to individual vendors and the markets as a whole. Because the work of managers often brought more customers, vendors were more likely to accept these changes. In any case, a uniform restructuring of fees augmented the business profile of the market in front of both the vendors and the community. Most important, in all cases where fee-restructuring was implemented, changes in fees generated greater revenues for the future development of the market.

Fomenting relationships with community stakeholders is crucial in solidifying the sustainability of farmers markets. Aside from providing valuable word-of-mouth marketing, these relationships help managers operate the market on a day-to-day basis; set up marketing and community events; and explore ways to expand the market. PPS encourages grantees to reexamine their board of directors and involve, whenever possible, community members in market decisions in order to foster a sense of community ownership of it. Strong community relationships have, in some of the grantees' markets, reduced the difficulty of securing permits, space, and other concessions from city officials. It also allows community leaders to feel more connected to vendors, increasing visits to the market. Most important, reexamining the board's functions and restructuring the board of directors' positions was viewed by grantees as important for setting the ground for future ventures and involving more community stakeholders.

## Case Studies:

### Holyoke Farmers Market: Holyoke Market Promotion and Diversity Project

*Holyoke, Massachusetts*

Holyoke Farmers Market's experience during the life of its grant provides insight into how small changes can make a big difference in the sustainability of a farmers market.

Holyoke, home to a large Latino community, is one of the poorest cities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with a poverty rate of over 26%. The Office of the Mayor, which serves as the operator and supporter for the market, sees the market as an important source of economic development and access to fresh food for low income residents. However, until the market received a PPS grant it had just a few vendors, stagnant on-site management and its impact was minimal. Engaging entrepreneurial management is key to increasing business at any market. In Holyoke, the market faced a particular challenge of having an unresponsive manager who was also a vendor and had been in charge of running the market informally for over twenty years. Unfortunately, this manager had gradually stopped taking care of his responsibilities. Project leader Jennifer Perez, from the Office of the Mayor, used the grant and support from PPS to revamp the market's management.



When this step generated resistance from both the recently-dismissed manager and a few vendors, Perez worked to create buy-in among all the vendors and to turn the market around. Meetings were convened to explain the situation, hear vendors' feedback, and build trust. Most important, in order to gain their trust, Perez took steps to expand business at the market. A former volunteer was hired as manager, new vendors with different products were recruited, a new bilingual marketing campaign was launched,

and cooking demonstrations were set up. The layout of the market was redesigned to create a community place. Finally, the new manager re-established relationships with city government, persuading them to close off streets during market days to create a more festive atmosphere.

As a result, the number of vendors, which had decreased from nine to six between 2005 and 2006, increased back to fifteen. Both the number of valued-added vendors and small- to mid-size vendors doubled. The number of community events increased by 38%, and the attendance numbers at market events quadrupled. Thanks to this improvement, and using PPS's grant as proof of viability, Perez obtained a grant from the Holyoke Cultural Council to continue hosting events at the market after the PPS grant had been completed. This grant, coupled with greater revenue from stall fees due to the increase in vendors, resulted in an increase in operating revenue for the market from about \$3500 in 2005 to over \$12,000 in 2007, the year after the grant was completed.

Now, Perez and the new market manager are assessing the possibility of creating a new board of directors and restructuring market fees. What at first was a minor crisis at a languishing market became a new opportunity to expand the farmers market's impact on the community with better governance and management.

## Ashe County Farmers Market

Jefferson, North Carolina

Although the Ashe County Farmers Market was a well-established institution in rural northwestern North Carolina, it was operated in an ad-hoc manner and, indeed, did not even charge vendor rents. According to project leader Carol Coulter, “the grant conversation with PPS inspired [market leaders] to change the market’s governance structure” and its vendor fee structure. The result was a major change in management, fee structure, governance, and relationships with city officials during the life of the grant.

On January 3rd, 2007, the Ashe County Farmers Market Committee (ACFMC), the market’s governing body up to that point, decided by majority vote to institute, for the first time, a fee system for vendors. With over 200 vendors registered, the ACFMC hoped to raise in excess of \$5,000 annually in fees. With these fees as well as the PPS grant, the market decided to hire a professional, part-time market manager to handle marketing, physical layout, and event planning. However, the decision to create fees and hire a manager caused great opposition from many vendors and unearthed deep issues over control of the market and its governance.

Since its inception, the market had existed under the Ashe County Cooperative Extension and operated on city-owned land. When the new fees were announced, vendors complained to the Cooperative Extension, mayor, and town alderman. These complaints set off conflict over who had ultimate power to make decisions surrounding the market. In response, the ACFMC incorporated the market as its own legal entity, the Ashe County Farmers Market Cooperative. As such, it successfully negotiated a ten-year, one-dollar lease for the market site with the town of Jefferson, giving them ultimate authority to run the market. Market leaders then established a board of directors. Today, the cooperative has a fifteen-person board of directors made up of vendors and crafters. Members of the board are nominated and elected by the vendors themselves. The board is now in the process of creating committees for finance, public relations and marketing, special events, and policies and procedures. These steps have allowed the market to establish clearer channels of communication and have delineated responsibilities moving forward.

The fee system and hiring a professional manager have been essential in creating buy-in for the farmers market’s new structure. The manager created a new system for allocation of market spaces. In the past, stalls in the market were allocated in a first-come, first-served manner. This led to vendors appearing at the market at 4:30 am to line up for a market stall. Under the new system, vendors can purchase and guarantee themselves a stall on market days for the whole season. The new manager, Patty Shay, ensures that the market remains organized and clean, collects fees, and most important, organizes marketing events to bring residents

into the market. As a result, according to Coulter, under Shay’s management, “market income has more than doubled during the last two years.” Last year, the market raised about \$4,000 in fundraising events. This market performance has eased vendors’ concerns over the usefulness of a new manager, and it has led to improved relationships with the market leaders. Today, the market’s total revenue is \$12,000, compared with zero two years ago. While still low, this revenue, along with the other governance changes, has strengthened the market’s long-term viability.





## EBT and FMNP

EBT, WIC and SFMNP all provide different sources of revenue that improve the long-term sustainability of farmers markets. By accepting these forms of payment, farmers markets tap into a larger market and widen access to fresh food. The Food and Nutrition Services received over \$39 billion dollars for programs in 2002. New York City alone authorizes over \$1.3 billion in food stamps every year, and over 1.1 million city residents received food stamps in 2006. The majority of grantees have received WIC and SFMNP coupons for several years, and most are now in the process of, or have recently begun, accepting EBT cards, which supplement-



ed paper food stamps in all states in June, 2004. In the process of establishing these forms of payment, grantees have found that community partnerships are vital to these initiatives' success. Most markets with a history of accepting WIC and SFMNP coupons maintained very satisfactory revenue streams from these coupons. Most markets struggled to meet expected EBT revenues this year but have taken steps to increase future sales. Over all, there is no denying that these initiatives help ensure financial viability.

## EBT

EBT at farmers markets allows low income residents greater access to healthy foods and increases the perception that all people can shop there, not only

those with a lot of disposable income. The acceptance of EBT is relatively new for most of the grantees. Of the 20 grantees, six markets had EBT prior to beginning their grant project; seven grantees initiated EBT at their markets, two markets are in the process of setting up EBT and five markets do not have it. Engaging in this new process, most of the grantees faced a learning curve. All grantees who sought to install EBT machines delayed the program's launch because of technical



difficulties. Some grantees expressed frustration at dealing with machine manufacturers or state agencies. Overall, most grantees were disappointed with the low number of EBT patrons at their market, on average doing under \$1000 in sales; however, Athens Farmers Market demonstrated the potential for a very strong EBT program in their first year at the market. In their first year of EBT availability, 53 of 70 vendors of the Athens Farmers Market participated and almost \$5300 was made in sales. And, with a promotional coupon program offered to EBT customers at Lynn Farmers Market, they were able to increase EBT sales from \$763 before the program began in 2005 to \$1077 in 2006, and up 58%, or \$1769 in 2007, the second year coupons were offered. From the performance of grantee markets in implementing WIC, SFMNP and EBT programs, it is clear that the most effective tools to make these sources more viable are aggressive promotion and establishing partnerships – with community and local government organizations - to build momentum around the programs.

There are reasons to be optimistic about the future of this program. In many cases, the grantees' markets broke ground in making EBT accepted at farmers markets. The High Springs farmers market, for example, was the first market in the state of Florida to accept EBT. Findlay Market in Cincinnati began accepting EBT from three states – Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio at the same place. Most important, the accumulated experience and the lessons learned from several successful markets provide a blueprint for making EBT a viable source of income.

### **WIC and SFMNP**

Many of the grantee markets have accepted the federally funded WIC/SFMNP coupon program for several years. The program offers between \$10-25 per season to income-eligible families and seniors to be used only on fruit and vegetables purchased at a farmers market. Largely seen as a “win-win” program, FMNP provides recipients an opportunity to afford fresh health produce, while increasing the sales of local farmers growing and marketing their produce. The importance of FMNP has even led some markets to base their season's opening and closing months on their state's coupon calendar. For the grantees, FMNP achieves two goals: increased sales and increased customer base. Markets in underserved communities see FMNP as vital to their vendor's ability to make money and provide revenue to the market. Without FMNP, many of these farmers markets, serving low-income populations, would have trouble achieving sustainability and have an even more difficult time offering their vendors a reasonable amount of sales. For example, the Lynn Farmers Market derives approximately 50% of its vendors' gross sales from redemption of FMNP coupons, and the High Springs Farmers Market saw 35% of its revenue from SFMNP coupons alone. In general, grantee FMNP coupon redemption has increased since receiving a PPS grant. The 2006 grantees had the largest increase; as a group, grantees increased their FMNP sales by 38%, while 2007 grantees made a more modest gain with an average 6% increase in FMNP sales. Without fully understanding why there was such a difference between the two grantee groups, one could make the

assumption that because the 2007 grantees had more established markets, they had already reached a stable level of FMNP sales at their markets, while the 2006 were, on the whole, less established markets that were still growing that customer base.

For recipients, the benefits of FMNP are quite clear. National redemption rates are over 60%, providing many families and seniors fresh, healthy produce. Several of the grantees experience even greater redemption rates or are model FMNP markets for their region. For example, the Fondy Farmers Market has one of the highest FMNP redemption rates in the city. In addition to providing healthy food access, FMNP also encourages recipients to become consistent farmers market shoppers. At the East New York Farmers Market, FMNP usage has increased from \$51,161 in 2005 to \$57,985 in 2007, while at the same time, the percentage of gross sales coming from FMNP has dropped from 80% to less than 50%. This market, which started out with sales almost exclusively from FMNP, has now evolved into a market that still maintains strong FMNP usage, but has stabilized their sales through increased cash and EBT purchases, thereby creating greater sustainability overall for the market and its vendors.

**Case Studies:**  
**Athens Farmers Market: Healthy Markets,  
Healthy Neighbors**  
*Athens, Ohio*

Located in southeast Ohio, Athens County in rural Appalachia has an abnormally high 33% poverty rate. In this area, many residents qualify for EBT, WIC, and SFMNP coupons. To capitalize on these programs, the market has honored WIC and SFMNP coupons for three years and began accepting EBT cards in 2007. The market's strategy to attract WIC, SFMNP, and EBT customers included training and outreach to foster buy-in among vendors, promotional activities to expand WIC redemption, and publicizing the acceptance of EBT at the market for the first time.

Before the beginning of the season, the market, in partnership with the local WIC office and the Athens County Jobs and Family office, held vendor meetings to explain the season's WIC, SFMNP and EBT initiatives. To publicize the market, manager Sarah Conley created posters and partnership packets for over 30 organizations in the area, including food pantries, the Athens Housing Authority, the Office of Children and Family Services, public libraries, and rural post offices. To solidify the use of alternative payment methods, a booth was set up at the market to house two part-time staffers who process EBT transactions and distributed tokens, and two staff from the WIC office who provided information to customers.

These efforts resulted in great success for the market. Purchases with SFMNP coupons, which have been strong since the beginning, were \$11,645 in 2006 and \$11,843 in 2007. This amounts to a 99% redemption rate for a region that annually receives a total of \$12,000 in SFMNP coupons. EBT was also highly successful in its first year. The market hosts 70 vendors in the high season, and fifty-three of them participated in the EBT program during its very first year. The market vendors collected \$5,297.00 in EBT transactions in 2007, which is higher than most, if not all, grantees for their first year of implementation. According to ACEnet executive director Leslie Schaller, the market hopes to generate a total of \$30,000 to \$40,000 in sales from WIC, SFMNP, and EBT combined, within the next three years.

The key to this success was, by far, establishing partnerships in the community. Schaller believes that radio commercials and coverage by the local newspaper did not attract as many people compared with word of mouth marketing that occurred as a result of relationships established with community organizations. These relationships helped create enthusiasm for the program among the vendors, secure the training provided to vendors on customer service, set up market events with health care partners, and spread word about the market's acceptance of alternative payments.





## Lynn Farmers Market: Expanding the Farmers' Market in Downtown Lynn

*Lynn, Massachusetts*

Lynn Farmers Market provides another lesson on the impact of partnerships and innovative marketing on WIC, SFMNP, and EBT sales. The market is located in Lynn, Massachusetts, a formerly industrial town of about 89,000 residents. Roughly 13% of its residents live below the poverty level. As the town seeks to reverse the economic decline by the departure of heavy industry, the community looks upon the market as an engine of economic development. Thus, sustainability of the market is of great importance for the community.

To ensure sustainability, the market looks at WIC, SFMNP, and EBT as important sources of income. WIC and SFMNP transactions accounted for 50% of gross sales in 2006 and 2007. Moreover, WIC/SFMNP coupon income has steadily increased at the market in the year after the grant: total market income grew from \$10,000 in 2005 to \$26,210 in 2006 to \$32,030 in 2007, the year after the grant. EBT, accepted since 2005, represents a much more modest fraction of overall sales – 1% - but EBT sales rose by 41% from 2005 to 2006. To achieve this level of use, Lynn Farmers Market designed a creative marketing campaign targeted to local community organizations. In the first stage of implementing this program, market personnel stuck to flyers and signs as a way of advertising its acceptance of these payment methods. Realizing that these tools were not having the desired impact, market representatives built relationships with community organizations, especially the local WIC office and local elementary schools. The WIC office is particularly helpful. The farmers market staff makes presentations about its products at the office, and it has worked with WIC personnel to schedule nutrition classes during the market season, thereby ensuring that residents have access to healthy food and that vendors get a supply of customers.

These steps have been complemented with aggressive marketing. All marketing materials— flyers, signage, postcards, and advertisements - include information about the acceptance of WIC, SFMNP, and EBT. Postcards are distributed at schools, and information about the farmers market's location, dates and hours is placed inside the folders in which WIC recipients receive their coupons. Market managers perform extensive research on the demographics of WIC, SFMNP, and EBT recipients. Based on this research, market representatives, local business owners and non-profit workers hold cultural events targeted at each specific demographic. Moreover, in 2006, the farmers market provided a financial incentive for customers: the market matched EBT purchases, dollar-for-dollar up to \$5 worth of produce, and allowed customers to take advantage of this incentive once a week. In order to measure the impact of this incentive program in 2007, market personnel

offered coupons at different points in the season to determine whether EBT shoppers were only shopping when the coupons were available. EBT sales began slowly but increased when coupons were offered, then dipped slightly without coupons but remained at a higher level than pre-coupons, demonstrating that many EBT customers were making the farmers market a regular place to shop. Money to support this incentive came from Project Bread, the leading contributor of funds to food programs in Massachusetts. EBT sales have consistently grown even without coupons, albeit slowly: sales were about \$750 in 2005, growing to \$1177 in 2006 to almost \$1800 in 2007. Still, these numbers are low compared with their WIC/SFMNP redemption.





## East New York Farmers Market: Urban Agriculture and FMNP to Strengthen a Low-Income Market – East New York Farms!

Brooklyn, New York

East New York Farmers Market provides another example of how acceptance of WIC, SFMNP, and EBT can provide sustained revenues for a market while providing fresh food to a community. Through community outreach and partnerships, the market has not only continued to expand coupon redemption and begin to grow EBT sales, but cash sales have also steadily increased. WIC and SFMNP provide significant sources of income for East New York Farmers Market vendors. WIC and SFMNP coupons amounted to \$53,106 in 2006 for the 14-vendor market; in 2007, the redemption rate was \$58,000, an increase of about 10%. The



redemption rate for SFMNP coupons in the neighborhood is 90%, and redemption rate for WIC coupons is roughly 45%. These are substantial percentages numbers for any community and, since the market is the only farmers market serving East New York and adjacent neighborhoods, very good news for the market's viability. Moreover, EBT purchases have risen steadily since the market began accepting EBT cards in September, 2005, growing from \$760 to \$1,300 in the past two years, an increase of 71%. Today, the market has a healthy combination of revenue sources, with

WIC, SFMNP, and EBT purchases making up roughly half of the market's revenue, compared to about 80% of the market's income in 2003. A steadily increasing number of cash sales are a positive sign of the market's economic growth and diversification of customers who are choosing to shop at the farmers market.

Similar to other grantees' markets, this success has been the result of fomenting relationships within the community. According to Sarita Daftary, project director of East New York Farms!, conventional advertising in newspapers and over the radio have not been successful in increasing WIC, SFMNP, or EBT sales. What has been successful, however, has been word-of-mouth through partners and vendors who live in the community. The market reaches out to workers at six local WIC offices and to food pantries in the area. These organizations make announcements about the farmers market and distribute promotional materials. Most important, vendors and youth interns serve as ambassadors for the market. According to Daftary, having vendors from the community at the market lends East New York Farms! credibility. Through their personal relations, vendors bring neighbors, colleagues, and community members to the market in a way that advertising cannot. Moreover, the youth internship program, which is universally viewed as an asset to the community, gives the farmers market legitimacy as a community-oriented place, inspiring more clients to visit.





# GRANTEE OUTCOMES AND CASE STUDIES:

## Expanding the Community Benefits of Markets

Strategic efforts were developed by the markets which enhanced spin-off benefits and the market's "sense of place" in the community thereby leading to increased sustainability for market management and participants. Using a wide variety of programs devoted to placemaking, social diversity, youth development and food access, many of the markets attracted and retained new customers while also serving as a forum for their community to address larger social and economic issues. The following section and case studies detail innovative ways that markets were able to become positive, safe, and healthy places for their communities.

### **The Benefits of Placemaking: Transforming, Revitalizing, and Re-Centering Communities**

Placemaking efforts were initiated to varying degrees by all of the PPS grantees. Because of the unique community and environmental contexts of the individual markets, these efforts ranged in form and strategy. Where as some markets incorporated physical improvements and design considerations into their placemaking agendas, others focused their attention on the creation of welcoming, safe, social environment that reflected the great diversity of the neighborhoods where their markets were located. Others sought to use their market as an impetus to ignite more widespread neighborhood and community revitalization; still others interpreted placemaking as an avenue for capacity building and resident empowerment. Regardless of the specific plan of action, all of the grantees recognized the value of placemaking as an effort to transform their farmers markets into something greater than simply places to buy fresh produce and local foods. The testimony of Daniel Hintz, one of the Fayetteville Farmer's Market's community partners, perfectly describes the positive effects of a market that has succeeded in placemaking:

The Fayetteville Farmers' Market is more than just an outdoor venue for fresh produce. It is a gathering place, a community event that fosters the unique

sense of place that Fayetteville is famous for. A new, diverse customer base is vital to the health and well-being of our downtown and we have appreciated their work in this arena.



A handful of grantees discussed the impact that PPS's Placemaking training, in which they participated as part of the convenings, had on the way they thought about the purpose and function of their market. In a telephone interview, Mt. Vernon Farmers Market manager Ron Farrell, discussed the ways in which their participation with the PPS-led workshop allowed them to think about "factors previously unconsidered" such as people flow and proximity to other uses and services—variables that are key to their market's overall success. Organizers in Webb City, MO, hosted their own placemaking exercise with the community, drawing more than fifty participants to the workshop. Many grantees – particularly those whose objectives included using the market as a space to foster racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity - drew connections between placemaking and larger social goals such as creating purpose, promoting democracy, and developing social capital. In Lansing, MI, the Allen Street Farmers Market's "Garden Guardians" program, food festivals, greenhouse, and proposed mural all contribute to their goal of having the market become

a place where people can “hang out with a purpose.” Similarly, Denver Urban Gardens in Colorado has initiated a “Nutrition Ambassadors” program and is seeing their placemaking efforts realized as the garden and market becomes an “oasis of hope, a vibrant mix of vegetables grown by community youth, homegrown arts and crafts, and a safe destination for learning about the strengths of cultural diversity.” Richmond, Virginia’s William Byrd Community House described its market as having a “social mission” that includes promoting cooperation instead of competition, and features an oral history and photo-documentation project as a way to illustrate what the market has meant for different people over time. All of these initiatives speak to the fact that placemaking is about much more than a sound physical design: placemaking is about people and celebrating the experience of being in a space together.

Creating safe, welcoming places were on the agendas of a number of markets, particularly in those communities where poor economic conditions had impacted the built environment. The Food Project played an integral role in creating a sense of place and community in what had previously been a “vacant, trash strewn lot.” East New York Farms! and Denver Urban Gardens embarked on similar projects, while Lynchburg Grows in Virginia took a slightly different spin on creating a safe space by emphasizing the needs of the local community’s physically, mentally, and emotionally disabled populations.

Finally, although it is known that people and programming are keys to a place’s success, certain elements of the built and physical environment are important as well. The grants allowed many markets to make low-cost improvements to their physical spaces and provide additional public amenities known to support vibrant public places. While some markets built shaded areas where people could sit and eat, others added flowerpots, landscaping, and signage. Holyoke Farmers Market, one of the markets featured as a case study below, discussed the importance of simply rearranging the vendors to create a feeling that the space was “full.”

These simple placemaking strategies, as many grantees noted, are straightforward but appear to have a considerable impact on the overall success of the market.



## Case Studies:

### **Holyoke Farmers Market: Holyoke Market Promotion and Diversity Project**

*Holyoke, Massachusetts*

In its grant proposal, the Holyoke Farmers Market spoke about the challenges it faced in “creating a market environment that is welcoming and exciting for all the diverse residents of Holyoke and also lucrative for the vendors.” Holyoke, a predominantly Latino community, is one of the poorest cities in the state of Massachusetts and suffers very high crime rates. In particular, the market wanted to develop a program aimed at engaging youth and older residents, groups they considered increasingly disconnected from fresh, local, and affordable food options. The market set out to implement the Holyoke Market Promotion and Diversity Project, a six-pronged effort, which included improving transportation access for seniors, offering monetary incentives, hosting cultural events, celebrations, and cooking demonstrations, publishing bilingual advertisements, underwriting the fees for specialty and ethnic vendors, and partnering with the Holyoke Health Center.

The cooking demonstrations and children’s events were some of the most popular attractions at the market. It was not uncommon to have lines of people waiting to get in; and at least one cooking demonstration was offered every day. During kids’ events, \$2.50 coupons were distributed as a way of reaching out to parents who might not have otherwise done their shopping there. Live music was provided on market days, and community partners included the Holyoke Cultural Council and a children’s orchestra. In addition to their formal advertising efforts, word-of-mouth communication among patrons brought more people into the space, and over the year the market was transformed into a much greater community destination. For Perez, these placemaking efforts have led to a much-needed “boost in self esteem” for the Holyoke Market, and have resulted in the City and Mayor’s Office recognizing its value and offering the market a permanent space and facilities along the newly revitalized “Canal Walk” in downtown Holyoke. Holyoke Farmers Market anticipates that it will “continue growing” over the next few years and that its success will have a “ripple effect” on downtown revitalization efforts as a whole.



Placemaking was key to achieving these goals, and the market developed an agenda that included a combination of physical improvements, social programming, and new management. Physical improvements included rearranging the vendors to create a “full” effect; offering shaded areas for patrons to sit and relax; and filling the edges of the market with sidewalk vendors. Moreover, the dismissal of a long-time problematic manager further boosted morale among the growers and sellers. These changes alone contributed to a revitalization of the market, recalled market manager Jennifer Perez. The number of vendors went from five and six per market day to as many as eighteen in two years.

## Mount Vernon Farmers Market: Skagit Cooks!

Mount Vernon, Washington



The three goals outlined in Mt. Vernon Farmers Market's grant proposal were to expand vending opportunities to the area's small farms, address food access issues experienced by many low-income residents in Skagit County, and assist downtown revitalization efforts by providing a "vibrant multicultural gathering space" for people to come together. Market Manager Ron Farrell discussed the role that PPS and their placemaking training had on "raising the awareness" among vendors and staff about the various issues inherent to redesigning and redeveloping the site.

Mount Vernon's own successes in creating a sense of place. Jumping off from the success stories of others, Mt. Vernon developed a program which included partnering with local restaurants, libraries, hospitals, city government, and neighborhood organizations to provide food demonstrations, children's events, improved signage, and special events. The market also has had a voice in the downtown redevelopment planning (the city is planning to fully redevelop a large section of the downtown because of flood concerns and has invited members of the market to participate in this visioning process).

Like the other grantees, Farrell said that the ultimate goal of the market is connecting farmers to the consumers. That it also creates a place for social gatherings is a welcomed byproduct and another reason for people to shop at the market. Placemaking also involves creating a collaborative atmosphere for farmers and vendors; according to Farrell, "every vendor is a partner, too" and should be treated as one. A testimony from a thirteen-year old volunteer named Maddy succinctly describes the feeling one gets when arriving at the market:

"All around me the people of Mount Vernon were chatting, eating, drinking coffee, and happily interacting with the world around them, early on a Saturday morning... I love to watch people interact with other people. I think being at the farmer's market kind of gives you/me a perspective of what life is like when you live in a close knit town, where everyone knows each other, and has grown up together."



Farrell stated that the collaboration opportunities with other markets that they experienced as a result of receiving the grant were substantial: "It was nice to share your experiences with something greater than your own market." The ability to bounce placemaking ideas and strategies off of other grantees was very important to

## Multiculturalism and Social Diversity

Many cities and towns across the country – including those where grantees’ markets are operating – are experiencing notable demographic shifts, particularly as various Asian and Latino/Hispanic groups move to the United States and establish new families and communities. Farmers markets have the potential to be the most socially diverse public places in a community, bringing people of different ages, genders, races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic status together around the experiences of food, shopping, music, and conversation. For example, in Athens, Ohio, one testimony from a market shopper recalled walking through the market and noting “three languages and five continents” represented. While farmers markets vary in their degrees of social integration, few are culturally homogenous, and many are increasingly representing the diversity of 21st century American communities.

In their proposals, every one of the grantees expressed a desire to use their market as an opportunity to bring different and new members of their community together. To that end, grantees developed strategies to create spaces of inclusion vis-à-vis increasing market access for low and moderate income and non-English speaking individuals and families; providing products and recruiting new growers/vendors to more accurately reflect the demographics of the community; and transforming the market spaces into places where cultural barriers are dissolved, marginalized residents are empowered, and differences are celebrated.

While some people tend to think that increasing cultural diversity is a challenge to building community, all grantees framed multiculturalism as a benefit and opportunity and saw their markets as a space where cultural barriers could be dissolved and difference could be celebrated. To that end, efforts often included social programming and events aimed at bringing different types of people together around a celebratory experience of culture. The Fayetteville Farmers Market in Fayetteville, AR, hosted SalsaFest, a celebration of the growing Latino and Hispanic communities living in the

city which brought 4,880 people into the market. In Webb City, MO, organizers developed the Market Roots celebration—an event honoring their Hmong, Latino, Irish, and Native American neighbors—in order to demystify cultural stereotypes and honor the market’s diverse vendors, growers, and patrons. During the event, vendors and market organizers posted signs with their country or countries of origin, creating a dialogue that everyone is from somewhere else – at some point in their family’s history.

Capacity-building is one of the great ambitions of market managers and staff, especially when it becomes possible to ‘level the playing field’ for socially and culturally diverse market vendors. Young Kim, the manager of the Fondy Market in Milwaukee, WI, discussed a transformation in his own thinking about the value of the market after one of his community partners told him, “The people in Milwaukee’s inner city are tired of being the object. They want to be both the subject and the verb.” This statement, along with other recognitions about the importance of using the market as an avenue for social empowerment, led to Fondy adopting a “Learn-Do-Teach” model, which aims to build knowledge, experience, and training among neighborhood residents. Similarly, Webb City’s grower and vendor training programs were developed to transfer skills and expertise into the hands of individuals not traditionally included in decision-making processes, most specifically, Hmong farmers. And Portland, Oregon’s Hacienda project’s main mission was capacity building: the Micro Mercante program allowed six low-income women vendors to develop the business and marketing skills necessary for achieving a 25% increase in revenue over the course of a year.

While public markets are important for promoting diverse interaction, they also have been found to foster social connections between people of similar backgrounds and facilitate the development of social capital in communities. Particularly for some immigrant communities where language and socioeconomic barriers may compound feelings of isolation and/or effect daily chores such as food shopping, farmers markets



provide a much-needed venue for connecting with the established community while simultaneously supporting local entrepreneurs. The work being done with immigrant communities, such as the Hmong vendor training in Webb City, efforts to engage the Hispanic community as customers and new vendors in Fayetteville, and the immigrant/new farmers' micro loan program at the Crossroads Farmers Market and others are all testament to this idea.



Market managers have also learned the importance of having a competent and knowledgeable staff. The Mount Vernon Farmers Market and the Holyoke Farmers Market were two of the markets that hired translators to provide better communication between vendors, patrons, and management staff. In High Springs, Florida, Webb City, Missouri, and Prosser, WA, organizers produced new signage and marketing materials to include information in the various languages that were being spoken in and around their markets. Together, these strategies assisted in transforming grantees' markets from purely shopping districts into places where diversity and difference are highlighted and respected.



## Case Studies:

### Webb City Farmers' Market: Building Sustainability and Community at the Webb City Farmers' Market

*Webb City, Missouri*

When asked about the ways in which she thought Webb City Farmers Market embodied social diversity and multiculturalism, market manager Eileen Nichols responded that "Webb City is changing, and the market is even more diverse than the community as a whole." Nichols and her colleagues have developed a multifaceted approach to using the market as an opportunity to celebrate these changes. Their strategy combines EBT mentoring with other markets, grower and vendor trainings, a bilingual advertising program and multilingual on-site signage, cultural festivals and cooking demonstrations.

The Market Roots multicultural festival, where all market vendors celebrated their country of family origin, created considerable dialogue about diversity in a very simple way, and the cooking demonstrations were popular among people of all backgrounds. The cooking demos incorporated different ethnic products for sale at the market into meals so that people could learn how to use unfamiliar produce. Nichols notes that the diversity of their grower and vendor base has resulted in a greater diversity of products available at the market.



The vendor and grower trainings have been a particular success in terms of increasing the market's social diversity, especially with regard to Hmong residents who buy and/or sell at the market. The number of Hmong vendors grew from five to ten in one year. Two of the market's trainings were geared specifically to Hmong growers and Hmong participation at the workshops was high, approximately 80%. Hmong vendors all experienced significant increases in sales, ranging from 200% to 700% more revenue than they had earned the previous year.

One of the primary goals articulated by Webb City was to also increase patronage among the community's growing Latino populations. To this end, market staff advertised in both Spanish and English; bilingual

posters were published in addition to advertising in a local Spanish language newspaper and on a popular Spanish language radio station. A bi-lingual market manager was hired to improve customer relations both in and out of the market, and weekly cooking demonstrations featured a local Puerto Rican chef. Nichols did notice an increase in Latino patrons at the market, and intends to continue searching for Latino vendors to join the team next year. They added Saturday as an additional market day, which they anticipate will make the market more accessible to Latino residents, unable to attend the weekday markets. Over time, the market hopes these efforts will help grow the Latino customer base.



In her concluding remarks, Nichols said that a year ago, one might have seen two or three non-white customers shopping at the market. Today, Webb City has become a "regular shopping site for the East Asian, Indian, Filipino, and Latino families who are moving to the area."

## Fairview Youth Farmers Market: Growing for Health

### Denver Urban Gardens

Denver, Colorado

Denver Urban Garden's (DUG) Fairview Youth Farmers Market began with the mission to create awareness about healthy eating among children and their families while simultaneously promoting youth leadership development and civic engagement. Sun Valley is a relatively small neighborhood (1,300 residents), but is rich in terms of the variety of flavors, foods, and cultural traditions among the Mexican, South and Central American, Ethiopian, Somali Bantu, Vietnamese, and Cambodian immigrant communities who are increasingly calling the neighborhood home. The majority of households are very poor: more than 70% live in poverty, and 98% of public school students qualify for free meal programs. In its proposal, Denver Urban Gardens articulated a desire to expand the Fairview Youth Farmers Market in order to foster youth leadership development and economic opportunities; create nutrition programs that reach out to and educate both children and parents; and celebrate the many cultural backgrounds in the community through festivals, cooking demonstrations, educational materials, and a multilingual cookbook.

A central goal of the Fairview Farmers Market's Growing for Health project was to engage a culturally and socioeconomically diverse group of parents and adults to support the youth effort. To that end, they partnered with social service agencies and organizations that adults in the community utilized, including the Metropolitan Organization for People, Denver Great Kids Head Start, the Sun Valley Coalition and Women's Group, Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline, and Denver Health. Together, DUG and these organizations launched a successful education and marketing partnership that ultimately inspired six new adults to volunteer their time at the market. Additionally, a partnership with the Early Excellence Program, which supplied \$5.00 coupons to be redeemed at the farmers market, helped attract parents and other adults who otherwise might not have shopped there.

The Fairview Farmers Market evolved out of a 5th grade classroom project focused on promoting fresh and healthy food. Looking around the Sun Valley neighborhood, the students realized that none of the establishments in their own neighborhood offered the types of healthy food they had read about in class. The students suggested that they utilize and expand the existing garden and market as a way to increase healthy food options in Sun Valley and educate their neighbors about the benefits of eating healthy.

The staff at Denver Urban Gardens has always fostered this bottom-up approach to community development. In the words of Education Coordinator Judy Elliott, "The market will be a place to promote understanding of the strengths of diversity. We plan

to actively encourage the market to expand and adapt in form and function according to community-generated ideas based directly on needs." In order to achieve their goal of expansion, the youth-led market had to address supply. They partnered with the Delaney Community Farm, especially utilizing the network of immigrant Somali Bantu farmers and gardeners in a network of more than sixty community gardens to supplement produce, especially culturally specific produce, on market days. In addition, some of the strategies they have developed include the "culturally appropriate" cooking demonstrations, the Nutrition Ambassadors program, which provides opportunities for students to act as community liaisons and educators with their parents and peers, and partnering with Youth Biz, a program that provides business skill and economic development opportunities for students through the design and sale of various added-value products at the market.

Cooking demonstrations were one of the main avenues DUG pursued as a way to promote foods that were "nutritionally dense and culturally appropriate" to the diverse Sun Valley community. Demonstrations were hosted by a number of community partners, ranging from the international award-winning chef's organization Les Dames d'Escoffier, to Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline, a national organization dedicated to addressing hunger and food security issues in low-income communities. Additionally, an adult resident chef hosted six demonstrations throughout the season, and the program's ten year-old chefs were described as "our most successful nutrition ambassadors." The highly successful end-of-the-season cooking/harvest festival attracted more than 200 of the neighborhood's residents to the market to celebrate the diversity of their foods and culture.

To date, these "community generated ideas" have contributed to the creation of a public space that, through collaboration, innovation, and local knowledge sharing, is achieving the social, environmental, and economic goals that DUG organizers realize are critical to a healthy and engaged Sun Valley community.



## Youth Development

As community-based establishments, farmers markets often provide spaces for youth development. They offer an opportunity for youth to interact with other community members, learn about healthy eating; explore their talents; and learn entrepreneurial skills. Grantees employed a wide spectrum of approaches to youth development, from one-day family events to year-long internship programs. In general, they approached youth development in two ways. Some created educational events that familiarized children with healthy eating habits and introduce them to new types of food and the world of farming. Others use the markets as a space to build youth's knowledge, and leadership, social and entrepreneurial skills.

Many farmers markets include children's activities as part of their marketing strategies, sustainability efforts, or vision for their communities. These activities vary in length, format, and programming but often involve interactive presentations, field trips, tastings, and art materials. For example, the Mt. Vernon Farmers Market's Skagit Cooks! Project, in Washington, produced activities for children on every Saturday of the 2006 market season. Activities were organized in partnership with the Children's Museum of Skagit County and Burlington Little School, and they included gardening, food preparation, painting, and singing.

New Haven's Foods Infusion Project designed a food-oriented literacy program for pre-school children in collaboration with the local children's museum that also was intended to draw low-income families to their markets. The project coordinator held three 30-45 minute sessions at 22 pre-school classrooms. In each session, the coordinator read an age-appropriate book and made a presentation on fruits, vegetables, and farming using props such as toys and teddy bears. The Infusion Project also provided props that could be used to teach about healthy eating and farmers markets to each classroom. In addition, all participants received books about these topics and money-saving coupons which were redeemed at the New Haven farmers markets.

The Allen Street Farmers Market in Lansing, MI, ran a Garden Club for local youth. Club members planted and maintained herbs, vegetables, fruits, and flowers. They learned soil preparation, water conservation, composting, and organic gardening. For their work, children were paid with tickets to educational centers or coupons to the local mall. Activities such as these give youth of different ages an opportunity to learn more about food, healthy eating, and agriculture. Other markets take a different approach; they involve youth in the running of the market in order to develop their leadership, social and entrepreneurial skills. In these markets, youth sell their produce and participate in the logistical running of the market. Vendors and community members often serve as mentors, teaching the youth the basis of farming and guiding them through the selling process. In some cases, market coordinators even serve as personal counselors and role models, particularly for at-risk or low-income youth. The farmers markets often partner with community institutions to recruit youth. Ashe County Farmers Market in North Carolina is partnering with a local high school to host twenty seniors during their senior project. The Athens Farmers Market in Ohio works with youth at a community garden located at a public housing site and introduces young growers to vendors and farmers at the farmers market. This work creates new job opportunities to disadvantaged youth. Working with youth brings satisfaction to both youth and mentors. Young growers learn new skills, how to work with others, and take pride in their work. Mentors earn the satisfaction of making a difference in their community. All grantees that engage with youth report a high level of satisfaction for vendors, youth, and the community. The work of Fairview Youth Farmers Market in Denver, Colorado, and the East New York Farmers Market in Brooklyn provide great insight into the work being done with youth and are presented in detailed case studies,...



## Case Studies:

### East New York Farmers Market: Urban Agriculture and FMNP to Strengthen a Low-Income Market – East New York Farms!

Brooklyn, New York

East New York Farms! (ENYF!), the sponsor of the East New York Farmers Market, established in 1999, provides youth in a poor, crime-ridden section of eastern Brooklyn an opportunity to grow and learn entrepreneurial skills. The market program engages youth in hands-on agriculture and market management during a nine-month long internship. Rooted in high standards, this program provides employment in an area of high youth unemployment and fosters leaders in the community.

Last year, ENYF! recruited thirteen year-old students from the neighborhood's middle schools using word-of-mouth advertising and a targeted mailing list. After an application review process, 12 interns were selected from a pool of over 45 applicants. This class of 12 joined past interns in managing the market and planting their own produce in a neighborhood garden. On market days, interns set up display tables, trash cans, and signs. They also ran their own stands and performed customer counts and surveys. At the end of the day, the youth broke down and cleaned up the market space. On some days the more experienced youth also collaborated on cooking demonstrations. Depending on their experience, interns were paid from \$5.50 to \$8 an hour.



Beyond teaching market management skills, the market developed community leaders. ENYF! staff members emphasized teamwork among interns. To encourage respect, they set up an incentive structure by which youth who disrespected peers could lose (and re-earn) some of their pay. On pay day, the staff offered the youth feedback on their performance and attitude. Periodically, the staff set up sessions for participants to offer feedback to one another. Aside from growing vegetables and running the

market, the curriculum included discussions on gender roles, race, group and individual identity, relationships between adults and youth, and food systems. ENYF! also built the youth's advocacy skills by getting them involved in a letter-writing campaign to express support for the SFMNP coupon program.

This training has produced very positive results. According to project leader Sarita Daftary, pre- and post-internship surveys indicated that youth "leave the program with a greater sense of responsibility toward their community." Instances of conflict and disrespect were almost unheard of among participants who have been in the program for more than a year. The youth's overall opinion of the program was really high. According to Daftary, several youth expressed that "working at the market was the best part of their week."





**Fairview Youth Farmers Market:  
Growing for Health  
Denver Urban Gardens**  
*Denver, Colorado*

The idea of a farmers market for children in the Sun Valley inner-city neighborhood of Denver began with a simple plant-growing classroom activity. Ms. Judy Elliott, project leader, noticed that children enjoyed growing their own plants and wished to keep their plants longer. She realized the “longer the children were involved [in taking care of the plants], the more involved they wanted to be.” Elliott capitalized on this enthusiasm by having the children plant their own vegetables and fruits in a community garden. Today, the Fairview Youth Farmers Market, operated by the Denver Urban Gardens (DUG), is almost entirely run by youth.



DUG recruited its 13 seven to eight year-old entrepreneurs from a fifth-grade class in Fairview Elementary School and from Decatur Place, a temporary home for families in transition out of homelessness. Under the supervision of six community members, the entrepreneurs planted, maintained, and harvested their own vegetables. They designed and distributed their own newsletter and bilingual promotional flyer. During market hours, the entrepreneurs set up the market, sold their vegetables, and counted and surveyed customers. Together, they had almost complete responsibility for the operation and success of the market.

During this process, they received guidance and training from market members and professional educators. As a result of working with PPS, DUG established a relationship with Micro Business Development Corporation (MBDC). MBDC trained the youth on redesigning the market environment, addressing client-vendor conflicts, marketing and packaging vegetables, and pricing products. They also trained the young entrepreneurs and community

supervisors the basics of handling money and making receipts. In addition, they assisted with the development of value-added products such as tee-shirts, bookmarks, and magnets, including working with the youth to design their own tee-shirt logo. Finally, MBDC and project mentor Hannah Friedberg advised the entrepreneurs on advertising the market. In response, they designed and utilized a “veggie mobile” cart to showcase their products in the community.

Aside from providing the youth with valuable leadership and management skills, the market provided the youth with a safe, welcoming space to address their personal issues. According to Elliott, many of the youth in Sun Valley have suffered violence and domestic abuse, and “they often see themselves as failures.” The market has provided a space where the youth can interact with others about their experiences and feel a sense of responsibility and pride in their work. Elliott and her colleagues emphasize teamwork, hands-on diverse activities, and relationship-building. Last year, when the garden was vandalized by an angry ex-participant, the group participated in a restorative justice program where the offender and victims faced each other to address the actions of the attacker and the sense of loss created in the victims. Steps such as this have allowed the youth in the market to grow and become confident in themselves and their community. However, the participants are not the only ones who benefit. According to Elliott, “the children teach me twenty times over [what I teach them].” As she put it, “this is not only a farmers market; it is a learning community.”



## Food Access and Healthy Living

Farmers markets perform the much-needed function of providing surrounding communities with a source of fresh food. The presence of many farmers markets creates an avenue to fresh, healthy food in disadvantaged communities, and, in the case of many of the grantee markets, their work educates the communities about the benefits of healthy eating.

Many grantee markets bring fresh fruits and vegetables to populations with little access to them. Several operate in areas where stores do not carry fresh fruits and vegetables, such as urban or economically depressed areas. East New York Farmers Market operates in a high-density neighborhood of Brooklyn which, despite having the largest amount of neighborhood gardens in New York, lacks a steady supply of fresh produce. Not surprisingly, according to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, East New York and adjacent neighborhood New Lots have a 33% obesity rate, 16% diabetes rate, and a rate of hospitalization for heart diseases well above the city's average. By bringing in healthy food, grantees such as the East New York Farmers Market provide a resource to fight these food-related diseases.

Being located in distressed areas is not the only way in which grantees have increased access to fresh food. Allowing for the use of alternative forms of payment - particularly EBT, WIC and SFMNP broadens food options for low-income residents. Many grantees have installed wireless or wired EBT machines at their farmers markets, and designed marketing tools to bring in new customers. One such market is Findlay Market in Cincinnati, Ohio. The market is located in the Over-the-Rhine (OTR) neighborhood, where 57% of residents live below the poverty line and 24% of the over-16 year old workforce is unemployed. The market implemented a token system whereby EBT customers could buy tokens worth the amount they wish to spend at the market. Under this system, which is replicated in many grantee markets, recipients of food stamps now have access to fresh food at the farmers market. However,

usage and redemption rates were mixed for the EBT, WIC and SFMNP. The 2006 grantees, mostly new to accepting WIC and SFMNP coupons, had a very healthy increased redemption rate of 38%, while the more established markets of the 2007 grantees posted a more modest 6% increased rate of redemption. Those markets already had, for the most part, well-established redemption programs. While most grantees enthusiastically developed EBT initiatives, the redemption rates were slow, with most programs bringing in under \$1000 in sales during the first two years, but the numbers are growing slowly.

## *Healthy Activities at Farmers Markets*

To promote their products and encourage healthy living, many grantees educate community members about the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables. They offer cooking demonstrations, provide samples of fruit and vegetables, and distribute educational materials. For example, the Prosser Farmers Market organized the "Eat a Rainbow" project in Prosser, WA. This event taught children and adults how to get their daily servings of vegetables and fruits by eating one of every color. Markets' cooking demonstrations in areas of high diversity often include culturally appropriate recipes. The Crossroads Farmers Market in Hyattsville, Maryland, incorporates Salvadoran recipes as part of their Family Days series in order to attract new immigrants to the market. While the recipes are perhaps not new to the visitors, the demonstrations remind the target population to include vegetables and fruits in their daily diets. In addition to interactive events, grantees frequently partner with community organizations to distribute information on proper nutrition. The aforementioned Prosser Farmers Market, for example, has distributed 150 USDA-approved "veggie" coloring books to children in K to 5th grade summer classes. The Farmers' Market Infusion Project distributes books and props on vegetables and farmers' markets to 22 pre-school classrooms in New Haven, Connecticut. Interactive events, classes, and educational literature all contribute toward raising awareness of healthy eating. Ultimately,

heightened awareness will result not only in a greater number of farmers' market customers but in healthier communities.



In addition to providing information on healthy eating, some farmers markets are partnering with health care organizations and are using markets as a place for a variety of health screenings and health education. Though the Community Health Market Alliance, a farmers market network operating in Camden, New Jersey, was a Ford Foundation grantee, they have shown how powerful the link between health care and healthy food can be for a market. Originally the network was organized by the Camden Area Health Education Center to be a place where the community could access fresh foods and improve their health, but quickly they saw that that mission could also ensure the sustainability of their markets. Health screenings, such as blood pressure checks and diabetes screenings were done at the market every week, and the market became a place where customers knew they could both purchase fresh produce and take care of themselves and their families. Neighboring health organizations were soon eager to join the markets, and they now have waiting lists for outside groups to share health education/information and hold their own screenings. They have even established September as Health Awareness Month, in which they focus all market activities on health education. What began a few years ago as one, small farmers market with a big mis-

sion quickly grew into a network of five markets, which are all supporting regional farms, providing access to fresh food for low-income communities, and increasing awareness of health issues.



**Case Studies:**  
**Fondy Farmers Market: Growing  
Community Project**  
*Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

Fondy Farmers' Market, operated by Fondy Food Center, Inc. (FFC), is located in Milwaukee's Near North Side, a neighborhood with high concentrations of hunger and poverty. Food pantries represent one of few sources of food for neighborhood residents. Fresh produce is sold in only a handful of grocery stores, and, according to project leader Young Kim, "residents do not have transportation to get to these stores."

Recognizing this issue of food access, Fondy provides a "farm to fork" solution to food insecurity in the neighborhood. Kim defines "farm to fork" as the process through which people access food: harvest, transportation, distribution, sell, preparation, and consumption. Through the farmers market, Fondy brings the harvested food to the community. Through a series of events, Fondy teaches community members to prepare and consume healthy food.



Fondy has been successful in implementing this strategy through partnerships and an aggressive educational campaign. Fondy has partnered with the local WIC office to distribute information on the market – and to inform the community that the market accepts EBT, WIC, and SFMNP coupons. Last year, it distributed 25 sets of DVDs on nutrition and healthy cooking to WIC offices in the area. It also produced six half-hour cooking shows on the local access television station. Moreover, it held cooking demonstrations at the pantries. To make the program more effective, market representatives exchanged information and coordinated events such as health fairs and walking clubs with other public health organizations working in the area.

Beyond providing educational materials, Fondy seeks to solve the lack of healthy food by getting the community involved. Accord-

ing to Kim, "[increasing food access] is a matter of finding leaders... as opposed to imposing a top-down method" of service provision. Identifying community members' lack of adequate cooking ware, Fondy has partnered with a local food pantry to distribute pots, pans and cooking utensils. During the 2008 season, instead of bringing chefs from outside, Fondy will hire a chef from the community; recipes will be collected from community members, and if possible, prepared in groups. This approach will make the cooking demonstrations more welcoming and effective, as community members will already be familiar with the ingredients. As a result, the Near North Side community will not only have access to fresh food, but will have the tools and knowledge to benefit from it.



## Athens Farmers Market: Healthy Markets, Healthy Neighbors

*Athens, Ohio*

The Athens Farmers Market, supported by the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet), provides a model to create a strong locally based food economy in the Appalachian region of southeast Ohio. The Athens Farmers Market serves an economically diverse community made up of University professionals, students, local businesses and an impoverished rural community. Athens County sits in the middle of 29 counties in South East Ohio, a region of Appalachia. Roughly one-third of the county's 63,187 people live below the federal poverty level. Athens County has a dense population in relation to other counties due to the presence of a public housing complex, low-income family housing units, and a mobile park. It also houses Ohio University, a major engine of economic development in the municipality. A main goal of this grant project was to create new marketing programs targeting low-income community members. To this end, the Athens Farmers Market began accepting EBT and developed a 'hometown shopper' card.



In this poor area, the very successful Athens Farmers Market serves as an enclave to jump start a sustainable food-based economy. Thousands of people in the region come to the market for vegetables, fruits, meats, dairy, and baked goods. Cooked specialty products such as jams and sauces are also available thanks to a commercial kitchen in which vendors can prepare their products. The market has accepted WIC and SFMNP coupons for years, and the area's redemption rates are much higher than the national average, with WIC redemption rates holding steady at 78% per year (in 2007, the area issued \$6,000 in coupons and the market accepted \$4,716) and SFMNP redemption rates over 98% for their region (in 2007, the area was issued \$12,000 in coupons and the

market accepted \$11,843). As of the 2007 market season, customers can also use their EBT cards. In the first year, they had 53 of the 70 market vendors were accepting tokens. Non-participants included 16 vendors who sold non-eligible products. In the first year, there was over \$5000 in EBT sales. Seventy seven percent of food stamp purchases were for fruits and vegetables, with fruit being especially popular, accounting for 27% of all transactions. An additional 12% of purchases were for cheese, meat and eggs, and only 5% were for baked goods. This has not only expanded revenue sources, but it has also established the market as a place where people in the county and the surrounding area can get fresh, affordable food.

The Athens Farmers Market developed a 'hometown shoppers' card in order to attract their low-income neighbors. This card, distributed to all Athens County Job and Family Services ACJ&FS clients, listed up to 10 participating vendors at which the shopper would receive a 10% discount. In addition, each time a sale was made, the card would be punched; once filled, the card would be entered in weekly drawings for prizes from the market. Unfortunately, the project was not successful with the target customer base, seemingly because these customers tend to frequent the market during corn and tomato season only. The market will continue to collaborate with ACJ&FS to develop more successful marketing strategies.

Building on the success of their EBT program and the weakness of the shopper card, ACEnet will continue to use markets as an engine to make communities in the Appalachian region more prosperous and healthier and to continue to strive to increase access and interest of all communities in southeastern Ohio.



# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In its work over the past three years, PPS, with W.K. Kellogg Foundation support, developed a national funding initiative around public and farmers markets that brought the markets and the communities they serve closer together. While there were grantees that had better results than others, we believe that this initiative successfully provided the resources to innovate: achieving broader community impacts and more effectively run organizations.

The 22 PPS grantee farmers markets represented significant levels of economic, racial and ethnic diversity, including higher proportions of poor and non-white residents than national averages, and these grantees sought to develop strategies and partnerships that could best address the needs of their communities. These grantees by and large worked in the most challenging types of locations, where need was often great but resources few. The diversity of individual grantees extended to their broader goals, which ranged from improving public health and nutrition, to reestablishing local food systems, to fostering urban-rural linkages, and to building a successful market around diverse ethnicities and income groups. The creative approaches they took to accomplish their goals, develop strategies for long term sustainability, and expand their reach into the community through strong partnerships, is an inspiration and validates the initiative's design.

While we plan on continuing our research into the factors for successful farmers in lower income communities, we have a better understanding of why some markets thrive, while others falter. The case studies in this report demonstrate how important it is for markets to be ingrained with the overall community, drawing on all its potential resources. Like in all levels of communities, markets need to provide an accessible and visible place that people want to experience and a product they want or need -- at a price they can afford. Markets that are in visible and important community places, which encourage social interaction and which have a wide variety of community activities,

attract more people than markets set up just as a place to buy food. Providing culturally appropriate foods, sold by diverse vendors which represent the cultural backgrounds of the community, broaden their base of support as well. Markets run professionally, with a broad based community board, have more capacity to reach out to shoppers and partners, and to run an economically viable organization.

Of particular relevance are the successful strategies grantees utilized to increase access to fresh, healthy food for children, families and seniors who previously had been unable to afford it, had been unaware of its availability, or lacked information about how to use it. Not only did two thirds of the markets initiate or continue to accept EBT cards/'food stamps', and FMNP coupons for produce and food products at the market, many engaged in successful partnerships with social service, faith based and food access organizations to spread the word about these programs at farmers markets. Additionally, they developed shopper incentive programs which matched EBT dollars spent, and have numerous strategies for educating shoppers about the use of produce, including recipe cards and cooking demonstrations. A number of grantees, reaching out to ethnically diverse shoppers, developed successful communication strategies that included multilingual signage and promotional materials (including print and radio advertising), and translators. Also, they have moved toward increasing the diversity of the produce available to meet the needs of a wide range of cultural and ethnic palates.

Seeking out and fostering partnerships between farmers markets and a wide variety of organizations was perhaps the most important and significant component of this grant program. Initially a bit skeptical of the benefit of developing partnerships, grantees emerged from the process with a deep awareness of the value to their markets and communities of joining forces with organizations and groups, such as social service, faith based, health care, immigrant services and downtown associations, to name a few. In some cases, these partnerships allowed for greater access to fresh

food by all people; increased economic sustainability; opened up co-promotional opportunities; provided mutually beneficial placemaking activities; and created a heightened awareness of both the farmers market and its partners. In a few cases, these partnerships led to access to further grant funding from the private and public sector. Perhaps most important though, is that they created a greater sense of community, connecting people and place in ways previously unimagined.

The highly successful mini-grant program, in which 12 markets received between \$10,000 and \$25,000 for a 1-year grant, revealed the various ways that a small grant could have a large impact on vendors and management at a market. These small grants allowed many of these markets to move away from having a volunteer staff to hiring a manager and/or staff to run the market. Single-handedly, this has done the most to help the sustainability of markets, long term planning, partnership development and increased community involvement. Management staff had the time to establish additional revenue streams for farmers and vendors, such as EBT, WIC and SFMNP coupons, and credit and debit card use, and through more focused promotional and marketing strategies. They were able to spend time developing strategic partnerships that could enhance the social and community impact of the market, especially through social service and health care organizations, as well as bring additional capacity and monetary resources. Also, many market organizations took the opportunity to develop their infrastructure, including the development of a governance structure, rules and regulations and long term strategies for sustainability.

The 2007 grantees, all with more developed infrastructures and proven fiscal track records, were able to utilize the grant to expand the reach into their communities; develop sophisticated partnerships; move to the next level of strategic planning, and solidify long term sustainability.

## **Recommendations for the Future Support of Farmers Markets**

The development of successful and sustainable farmers markets hinges on the provision of resources that will create and/or support an infrastructure for the organization and build the capacity of those individuals leading them. Resources are most useful in the form of grant funding and technical assistance, such as conferences, mentoring, teleconferences and networking opportunities.

A sufficient level of funding allows for a market organization to hire a manager or management staff. The ability to move beyond a volunteer staff is critical for success, especially in the early years of the market.

It will be important for funding and resources to be made available from both governmental and non-governmental organizations at the local, state and national level. Funding can be targeted in the following areas of capacity building and/or subsets of the market's development:

- Provide technical assistance and capacity building experiences for management, farmers and vendors, including training in marketing and promotion, market policy and procedures, and partnership development.
- Develop overall marketing and promotion program for the market.
- Build the market's organizational capacity, including market committee or board development and strategic planning for long term sustainability.
- Expand community partnerships around targeted program development for such topics as nutrition education, childhood obesity, food access, increasing diversity, and immigrant farmer/vendor programs, to name a few.



There is a bright future for farmers markets in the United States. While there is something wonderful about the grassroots, indigenous process that is creating truly unique markets, there is still a need for more structure and underlying support. With local, state and federal support, adequate funding, and industry support, such as state farmers market associations, farmers markets can achieve their true potential, both as economic engines and as catalysts for community revitalization.



# APPENDIX

## MARKET PROJECT SUMMARIES

### 2006 Grantees:

#### **Fayetteville Farmers Market: Diversifying Rural Mountain Producers Exchange**

*Fayetteville, Arkansas*

The Fayetteville Farmers Market is one of the “jewels” in the city, providing locally-produced food and crafts from nearly one hundred vendors across the region. Over the past few decades, the demographic composition in Fayetteville has shifted dramatically: between 1990 and 2000, non-English speaking households increased by 363%, and residents identifying as Hispanic and Latino increased more than eight-fold. Realizing that a failure to reach out to new immigrant communities in the region would result in the failure of the market as a whole, the organizers of the Fayetteville Farmers Market embarked on a multifaceted campaign to increase the diversity of both their vendor and customer bases. Utilizing a strategy of “direct and personal” outreach, which included bilingual advertising, a bilingual farm tour, personal contact with and presentations to Hispanic and Latino community organizations, the recruitment of a Spanish-speaking volunteer translator, and hosting the widely-popular Salsa Fest, market organizers worked toward achieving their diversity goals.

Customer surveys administered through a partnership with the University of Arkansas Survey Research Center ultimately concluded that the market’s efforts to increase Hispanic and Latino representation at the market had not produced their desired effects. However, qualitative testimonies from vendors and volunteers noted an increase in immigrant communities, including Hispanics and Latinos, on market days. Although by the end of the grant cycle only one Latino vendor had been recruited, organizers in Fayetteville had successfully recruited three vendors of Asian descent, which they believe has positively contributed to the threefold increase in Asian shoppers at the market over the past year.

#### **Fairview Youth Farmers Market: Growing for Health**

*Denver Urban Gardens, Denver, Colorado*

The Fairview Farmers Market, organized by Denver Urban Gardens (DUG), provides disadvantaged youth, in one of Denver’s poorest and most culturally diverse neighborhoods, the opportunity to run a farmers market, allowing them to develop entrepreneurial and leadership skills.

In an effort to make the Fairview Farmers Market more sustainable, DUG wanted to increase the hours of the market and work with the neighborhood’s youth, engaging them in the operations of the market. To begin, they recruited new, young vendors from the Fairview Elementary School’s fifth grade class. Market leaders also worked with PPS and their peer mentor to identify areas in which the market could grow. Following these discussions, the market partnered with Micro Business Development Corporation (MBDC), an organization dedicated to helping small businesses grow. Through MBDC, the youth were trained on pricing and packaging products. They were also trained on customer service, market set-up and design. Together with MBDC and market leaders, the youth crafted a message about community health and healthy eating in order to promote their market, and became “nutritional ambassadors” in their communities.

The market experienced great improvement as a result. It became a place of community congregation, where over 200 people attended events organized by the youth. Most important, the market was a place where the youth could grow and learn. For these youth, several of whom suffer from or witness domestic abuse, the market is a place to regain a sense of confidence. The market encourages them to work as a team and allowed them to see the value of their work. As it grows, the Fairview Farmers Market continues to not only provide fresh produce to a low-income and culturally diverse neighborhood, but it continues to offer a much-needed, much-supported learning community.

## **Holyoke Farmers Market: Holyoke Market Promotion and Diversity Project**

*Holyoke, Massachusetts*

Working with the City of Holyoke's Mayor's Office and Holyoke Food Policy Council, the Holyoke Farmers Market undertook the Market Promotion and Diversity Project in order to diversify the market's customer and vendor bases.

The strategy to bring new customers included coupons, bilingual brochures, bilingual cooking demonstrations, and special events such as senior days and cultural performances. In particular, marketing efforts targeted seniors and new Latino residents. Making strategic management decisions proved to be successful in bringing in new vendors, especially revamping the market management and redesigning the market layout.

These strategies, coupled with a change in management, produced the desired results. The number of community events increased by 38% and number of participants at community events quadrupled between 2006 and 2007. The number of vendors, which had decreased from nine to six between 2005 and 2006, increased to as high as 18 in 2007. Both the number of value-added vendors and small- to mid-size vendors doubled in this year. The number of Latino vendors quadrupled. Thanks to this improvement, they were able to leverage the PPS grant into another grant from the Holyoke Cultural Council. This grant, coupled with greater revenue from stall fees due to the increase in vendors, resulted in a 64% increase in operating revenue from 2006 to 2007 and a 302% increase from 2005 to 2007.

## **Lynn Farmers' Market: Expanding the Farmers' Market in Downtown Lynn**

*Lynn, Massachusetts*

The City of Lynn, MA, located just north of Boston, is a culturally and socioeconomically diverse community. For decades, the city has suffered the effects of industrial decline, but today is "on the brink" of an economic

renaissance. Through a very successful partnership with the city's Office of Economic and Community Development, organizers at the Food Project are working to make sure that the Lynn Farmers Market becomes a symbol of, and a catalyst for, the city's revitalization.

In their proposal, three challenges were identified as inhibiting the overall success of the market: the neighborhood context resulted in perception issues, the market needed site improvements, and the vendor base did not represent the local community. To these ends, the Food Project utilized both old and new community partners to launch a revamped marketing campaign (which included bilingual signage, newly designed banners, and site/landscaping improvements) and to recruit vendors that are representative of the community. Organizers held a series of focus groups with neighboring community-based groups to help identify barriers and opportunities for recruiting local vendors. This approach paid off: by the time they submitted their interim report, there had been a 100% increase in local vendors selling at the market. In an effort to increase the patronage of low-income seniors and families, relationships were fostered with the local WIC office and the Council on Aging. Market organizers also developed an innovative program aimed at increasing their EBT transactions: taking a "universal approach" to accepting EBT usage, for a period of time the market offered up to five dollars in produce for every EBT dollar spent. News about this program spread quickly through the community and approximately 80% of the \$1077 in EBT transactions were made following the implementation of their incentive program. Finally, through their connection to the city, the Lynn Farmers Market has secured a permanent indoor/outdoor space for the 2008 season. Organizers speak of a "tangible and noticeable improvement in the area" and expect that the market will continue to have a positive impact on people and the environment in Lynn.



## **Allen Street Farmers Market: Farmers Market Expansion and Neighborhood Outreach**

*Lansing, Michigan*

For the past two years, the Allen Street Farmers Market in Lansing, MI, has provided a much-appreciated community gathering space for residents in the city's Eastside neighborhood. In their grant application to PPS, the market's organizers articulated a three-fold mission, which included increasing access among residents by expanding marketing efforts, promoting nutrition and knowledge about local food systems through cooking demonstrations and youth programming, and strengthening community identity and pride by offering social programming, festivals, and volunteer opportunities. All three of these objectives worked together to send the message to residents that "more than a place, community is an experience," and that the Allen Street Farmers Market was a place where such community could be experienced for people of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Organizers of the market offered a number of inventive and educational events, including monthly food-related festivals (including the popular Good Night Moon Festival & Community Pot Luck, held on the last day of the market season), health-related events, such as the weekly Food Chatter Booth and lead-testing clinics, and marketing/token programs aimed at increasing access among low-income residents. Their initial goal of increasing EBT redemption by 100% (\$3,000) was missed by a mere \$150, but their other goals were readily met. Overall, organizers felt confident that they had increased knowledge about the market and the benefits of local food to groups who had previously underutilized the market. They anticipate that future efforts, especially the youth component and urban greenhouse, will allow them to exceed their initial objectives, effectively creating a place where the people of the Eastside neighborhood can come together and "hang out with a purpose."

## **Midtown Public Market: Midtown Public Market and Midtown Global Market 2006 Outreach Collaborative**

*Minneapolis, Minnesota*

The Midtown Public Market articulated three goals in their grant proposal to PPS. First, they aimed to increase access to the farmers market for low-income residents, especially to food assistance recipients. Second, they expressed a desire to increase the diversity of both the products sold at the market and the vendors who sold them. Finally, they sought to achieve economic sustainability by reconciling their "social goals with the economic reality" of the neighborhood. Organizers proposed to achieve these goals through a combination of targeted marketing, educational events and cooking demonstrations, an EBT pilot program, inviting different types of growers to sell at the market, and programming market days with social events, such as "culturally specific" health fairs and festivals. Two of these events, La Feria (a fair focused on Latino family health) and Native American Day, drew in crowds of 3,800 and 2,300 people, respectively.

Through a partnership with the Minnesota Food Association's New Immigrant Agriculture Program, the Midtown Farmers Market has reached out to the Hmong and Latino communities and will continue their efforts to recruit vendors from these groups to sell at the market. Their EBT program was successful, but proved to require more time and resources than market organizers had originally anticipated. For this reason, a number of their smaller events and programs had to be postponed. Although they were not able to launch all of the new initiatives they had proposed, "the groundwork" for these programs was established and organizers of the Midtown Market feel confident that they will implement the additional initiatives in the coming year.

## **Findlay Market: Findlay Market Farmers Market EBT Project**

*Cincinnati, Ohio*

Findlay Market, located in Cincinnati, OH, is the oldest public market in the state. For 153 years, Findlay has been the “primary source of fresh food” for residents in the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, an area which over the decades has become increasingly poverty-stricken. Realizing that many residents in the neighborhood could not access the fresh, healthy food available at Findlay because the market lacked EBT capability, representatives from the Corporation (the market’s managing body) applied for PPS funding in order to support the research, implementation, advertising, and evaluation of a tri-state token-based EBT program.

Guided by a 41-point work plan, which included, but was not limited to, researching EBT best practices, networking with other markets, developing collaborative partnerships with social service, health, and community organizations, applying for EBT approval from the state, promoting the new EBT system through a variety of marketing avenues-- including bilingual advertising and permanent signage-- organizers achieved all but one of these 41 objectives by the end of the grant cycle. Unfortunately, sales from EBT customers fell short, totaling \$313 from 25 customers over the course of the season. New and innovative strategies, such as the distribution of “market bucks” to partner social service organizations and additional marketing to the neighborhood’s Hispanic and Latino populations, will be implemented in the future as a way to continue outreach to the market’s targeted population. Described by the market’s peer mentor Dianne Eggert as an “underused asset to the city of Cincinnati,” organizers at Findlay Market have realized the importance of using partnerships and activities in order to “assume leadership in redeveloping the blighted neighborhood surrounding the market.”

## **Micro Mercante Program: Emerging Markets/Mentorship Pilot for Latino Vendors**

*Portland, Oregon*

Hacienda is a community development corporation in Northeast Portland, OR, which focuses on providing social and economic upward mobility opportunities for residents living in their affordable housing developments. In order to address what they saw as an absence of market vendor mentorship programs in Portland, the organization proposed to use PPS funding to create a “bilingual, culturally appropriate mentorship program” that would train and place six low-income, Latina vendors in farmers markets across the region. Hacienda proposed that it would support these six vendors by securing permits and access to a commercial kitchen; locating farmers markets to sell their products; and providing business and financial skill-building workshops.

By their mid-term report, four of the six vendors were already selling their products at local and regional markets, and by the end of the market season all six vendors had been secured. Trainings focused on money and food protection management helped these women increase their capacity, while conversations with their market mentor led to the decision to focus on the production of their most successful item, tamales. The demand for tamales was increasingly exceeding supply, so Hacienda helped the women secure additional time in the commercial kitchen. As a result of these efforts, the vendors were selling an average of 100 to 220 tamales per market day, and the program’s anticipated goal of increasing the income of these women by 15% was surpassed. Over the course of the program, their incomes collectively were increased by 25%, and additional successes are expected in the future.

## **Lynchburg Community Market: Strengthening Lynchburg Community Market's Foundational Business Model**

*Lynchburg, Virginia*

The Lynchburg Community Market, founded in 1783, is one of the longest running public markets in the country. Over the past few decades, the city of Lynchburg has experienced a decline in population and increases in poverty, especially among families with children. City officials have responded by embarking on a community revitalization plan that includes linking planning to public health and creating or revamping a number of public spaces around the city. The Lynchburg Community Market is one such space, and when the nonprofit urban agriculture program 'Lynchburg Grows' applied for PPS funding, it did so on the premise that it would create a sustained presence for itself at the market vis-à-vis the development of job and life skill/employment opportunities for disadvantaged young residents and the formulation of a comprehensive business plan. Through these two avenues, Lynchburg Grows expected to achieve four goals: to increase sales and promote economic upward mobility among low income, disabled youth; to create a sustainable operation plan; to tap into city-led revitalization efforts; and to create a stronger sense of place and community at the market.

The Business Plan produced by the organization was based on an economic empowerment model which emphasized vocational training and skill building, developing partnerships with local schools, community gardens, neighborhood centers, and summer camps. To that end, Lynchburg Grows developed a youth grower/entrepreneur program that focused on youth with physical, cognitive and mental health disabilities. In its first year, it remained very small, serving approximately ten youth. Organizers agreed that they had considerable work to do in order to take the program to a sustainable level and become a productive program of the Lynchburg Farmers Market community. Lynchburg Grows hopes to use this business plan to help guide their overall organizational mission as well

as their future participation at the Lynchburg Community Market.

## **Mount Vernon Farmers Market: Skagit Cooks!**

*Mount Vernon, Washington*

The Skagit Cooks! Project, carried out by the Mount Vernon Farmers Market, aimed to increase availability of fresh food to families in Skagit County, implement EBT, sponsor kids' activities with the children's museum, and build visibility of the market as an integral part of the downtown's redevelopment plan.

The market launched a marketing campaign through its partners, particularly the local community health agency, schools, and the local hospital. Local media was contacted to cover the launch of the market season, publicize the PPS grant, and announce the new acceptance of EBT cards. Spanish-speaking families were specially targeted through flyers, newsletters, and Spanish-language TV and radio, and a bilingual worker was hired to translate marketing materials and assist with cooking demonstrations. Finally, the market reached out to local farmers, particularly minority growers, to recruit new vendors during the season. The project also undertook comprehensive activities that brought families and children together around food and nutrition. Market leaders organized cooking demonstrations and cultural events, such as Mexican folk dancing and live music. In partnership with the Children's Museum of Skagit County and Burlington Little School, the market organized gardening and food preparation activities, art projects, and sing-alongs for children every Saturday during the 2006 market season.

Skagit Cooks! secured an EBT machine for the 2006 season. However, technical difficulties kept the market from launching the system until very late in the season. All of these efforts resulted in higher sales, more vendors, and more customer visits. With new vendors and the addition of a new pilot site at the local hospital, Skagit Cooks! made \$47,319 more in 2006 than in 2005 and \$1,900 more in 2007 than in 2006. The market also

had, on average, two to five more vendors per week in 2006 than in 2005. Rapid Market Assessment (RMA) counts revealed that the market had 207 more customers in August of 2006 than in August of 2004 and 244 more customers in August 2007 than in August 2006.

### **Prosser Farmers Market**

*Prosser, Washington*

In 1993, the Prosser Economic Development Association launched the Prosser Farmers Market in an effort to create additional economic opportunities for the small-scale, minority, and start-up farmers who were increasingly dominating the agricultural scene in the region. Through the PPS grant, organizers of the Prosser Farmers Market were able to continue their social and educational programming for the community and foster partnerships with neighboring organizations such as the Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, and the local school district.

In terms of programming, the Prosser Farmers Market focused on three areas: increasing the number of vendors at the market, particularly to reflect the culturally diverse community; developing a nutrition education focused program for children; and increasing the sustainability of the farmers market through fundraising and new partnerships. Prosser's Eat a Rainbow program focused on a variety of children activities to educate children and their families about the variety of nutritious fruits and vegetables at the market and the healthy advantages of eating them every day. Indicators of the market's success included a 32% redemption rate of Market Bucks (\$1 coupons given to Migrant Summer School students along with copies of the Farmers Market Coloring Book), and a 37% increase in vendors over the course of the year. The farmers market management team suffered some setbacks, notably the death of a manager's family member, and this caused them to miss some of their goals for fundraising and increasing the overall market sustainability.

### **South Madison Community Farmers' Market: Growing the South Madison Community Farmers' Market**

*Madison, Wisconsin*

The South Madison Community Farmers' Market's has increasingly transformed from a place to buy and sell fresh food into a central community destination and a catalyst for resident empowerment and social change. In its application to PPS, market organizers articulated four objectives by which to achieve their community-building and public health goals. First, in an effort to promote inter-organizational collaboration and partnership, organizers articulated a desire to form a Board composed of representatives from the other community-based organizations located in the newly rehabilitated Villager Mall. Second, they sought funds in order to stabilize the market financially and support the ongoing coordination of events and programs. Third, they sought to develop a youth garden and opportunity for youth to sell at the market. The final objectives included expanding public amenities and placemaking elements to boost the social atmosphere of the market, and expanding the youth-farmer mentoring program.

Despite being confronted with some significant challenges, such as having difficulty recruiting board members, negotiating bureaucratic 'red tape' with the new local health department inspector, underutilization of the EBT system, and the death of one of the market's longtime Hmong vendors, the South Madison Community Farmers' Market achieved all of the goals it set forth in its proposal, especially offering mentoring opportunities for youth through Growing Power, an agricultural-focused non-profit organization located in Milwaukee. Future efforts will be focused on marketing their EBT system and fostering additional community partnerships to continue transforming the market into a place where people come together in the celebration of local food, health, and culture.



## 2007 Grantees:

### **City Farmers' Markets (CitySeed, Inc): Farmers' Market Foods Infusion Project: Connecting City Farmers' Markets & New Haven Families through a Literacy-Based Preschool Curriculum**

*New Haven, Connecticut*

CitySeed Inc., in New Haven, developed an innovative children's literacy program oriented around healthy eating and farmers markets. The project centered on connecting children and families - especially low-income families - to farmers markets through a reading program at which coupons redeemable for the farmers market were distributed. Working in partnership with the Connecticut Children's Museum and School Readiness Center (SRC) pre-school classrooms in the city, the Foods Infusion Project reached over 3,500 people between children, parents/caretakers, and community members.

The "Saturdays at 2" reading events at the CT Children's Museum targeted children and families and featured storytelling by local artists, readers, and musicians, all of whom focused on food, farming, and healthy eating. These events were so successful that the Museum adopted them as a summer-long feature. In all, CitySeed and the Museum held 15 "Saturdays at 2" events, more than doubling the originally planned number of events.

Drawing from the content of these Saturday sessions CitySeed's project coordinator held three 30-45 minute sessions at 22 SRC pre-school classrooms. In each session, the coordinator read an age-appropriate book such as *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss and made a presentation on fruits, vegetables, farming and farmers markets, using props such as toys and teddy bears. Children received books, vegetable seeds, and coupons redeemable at CitySeed's four farmers markets. Teachers received props that could be used to teach about healthy eating and agriculture to their students. Along with other events such as children's concerts,

CitySeed raised awareness about food, farming, and healthy eating in ways that were creative, family-friendly, and far-reaching.

### **High Springs Farmers Market: Food Security Project**

*High Springs, Florida*

The High Springs Farmers Market's experience embodies the difficulties encountered and overcome by many of our grantees as they have moved toward economic sustainability.

Coming into the grant application process, the High Springs Farmers Market faced great obstacles to its viability. A reduction of Florida's Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) in 2007 threatened to decrease the market's revenue by \$8,000 - 35% of the market's previous year operating budget. James Paul Park, where the market is held, lacked adequate access to water, electricity, and telephone lines. Facing a major reduction in revenues, and operating with few amenities, the market was under a serious threat.

In response, High Springs sought to revitalize the market by redeveloping the park, diversifying its products with new vendors, and expanding the customer base. A new design for the park was drawn and shared with the community. A Community Garden Program helped local low-income residents grow and sell their own produce at the market. The market also developed an EBT program, which is the first of its kind in Florida. Finally, an aggressive WIC FMNP coupon distribution strategy was put in place.

While not all plans materialized, the market is in much better shape to succeed: \$35,000 in funding was obtained from the city for park design; three community gardens were developed; with a new community garden site in a low-income area underway. Three new vendors joined the market in the winter. The distribution of WIC FMNP coupons, done through local partnerships, has resulted in a high redemption rate. An important goal of this project was to ensure that

low income senior citizens would have access to fresh produce in the absence of the state providing SFMNP coupons. High Springs partnered with a faith-based organization to provide coupons to these seniors, and redemption rates were very high. The project director is continuing to advocate for more funding for SFMNP in central Florida. The EBT terminal is now running, and the market is designing a marketing strategy to bring in a new wave of customers. The market is now in the process of developing a long-term plan, including the development of a strategic plan. The High Springs Farmers Market is now poised to become a vibrant engine of economic development in the area.

### **Takoma Park Farmers Market: The Crossroads Farmers Market Project**

*Takoma Park, Maryland*

Since 1982, the Takoma Park Farmers Market has been a leader in the local food movement, growing from three to 23 vendors over the years and attracting upwards of 3,000 shoppers on market days. In an effort to reach out to the increasingly diverse community in Takoma Park, market organizers launched the Crossroads Market, an initiative which included the addition of a midweek market, the provision of financial and technical assistance to growers through the development of a micro-lending program, the installation of an EBT/credit and debit card system, and the development of a coupon incentive (“Fresh Check”) program. Additionally, “Family Days” and other community events and the installation of multilingual signage have contributed toward their diversity goals.

While their micro-lending program ended up taking much more time to implement than organizers had envisioned, they have secured their first loan recipient and plan to continue the program in the future. Their Fresh Check program was very successful: \$7500 in Fresh Checks was redeemed by customers. And the addition of a wireless terminal that accepts both EBT and credit/debit cards resulted in an additional \$40,000 in sales at both markets.

### **Webb City Farmers’ Market: Building Sustainability and Community at the Webb City Farmers’ Market**

*Webb City, Missouri*

In 2007, the Webb City Farmers’ Market received PPS’ Diversifying Farmers Markets grants with the goals of using the funding to increase the growing knowledge and capacity of its vendors and producers, increase its customer base, and develop a programming and marketing strategy aimed at reaching out to the rising Hispanic/ Latino and Asian communities settling in the Webb City area. It sought to achieve those goals through, among other things, the implementation of an EBT system, revamped marketing materials, developing new community partnerships, and training and education programs for the growers and vendors selling at the farmers market.

By the time Webb City submitted their interim report to PPS, they had already achieved many milestones, including the implementation of their EBT program, the development of youth-centered activities, a number of trainings and workshops for their vendors (with a special emphasis on Hmong farmers and vendors), and the planning of a multicultural Market Roots Celebration. By the end of their grant cycle, the market had experienced a great amount of success. Although outreach efforts to the Latino community did not meet their anticipated goals, their Hmong vendors saw revenue increases as high as 700%. Their programs and celebrations—especially the Market Roots celebration—brought in thousands of customers. And their training programs saw an 80% average participation rate. Because of the increasing success of the market, organizers at Webb City are now working on devising a strategy to accommodate the large number of visitors patronizing the farmers market. One device for addressing traffic and parking issues has been to promote the use of alternative transportation, including biking and walking.

## **East New York Farmers Market: Urban Agriculture and FMNP to Strengthen a Low-Income Market – East New York Farms!**

*Brooklyn, New York*

In terms of measurable, quantifiable successes, East New York Farms! has one of the most striking programs of all the PPS grantees. Their mission to organize a multigenerational and multicultural movement around local food systems and community economic development began in 1995 out of a community planning process hosted by the Pratt Institute. Since then, the East New York Farmers Market has evolved to include 14 vendors and as many as 12,000 patrons per market season. In their proposal, farmers market organizers discussed a desire to increase the patronage of residents receiving FMNP coupons and overcome issues of mobility and access through the development of partnerships with local churches; however faith-based organizations did not become significant partners. They also sought to create additional economic opportunities for community growers and continue to foster a celebration of the neighborhood's cultural diversity.

Actual outcomes far exceeded the goals set forth in their proposal. In total, their community gardens and youth-run urban farms produced \$18,000 in produce over the growing season; combined with outreach efforts that brought 22 new gardeners (18 of which were immigrants) to supply the market, and producer/vendor training programs, the market experienced a 20% increase in sales over the year. Nineteen cooking demonstrations were organized with the local WIC office, which contributed to a 24% increase in WIC coupon redemption. Additionally, the market experienced a 62% increase in EBT transactions over the course of the grant cycle. Efforts to promote cultural diversity included translating marketing materials in five different languages and hosting regular events which included food, music, and dance.

## **Ashe County Farmers Market**

*Jefferson, North Carolina*

During the past year the Ashe County Farmers Market underwent significant changes in its governance structure, physical layout, and organizational capacity. These changes have improved the capacity and sustainability of the market moving forward.

During the 2007 season, market leaders sought to ensure the sustainability of the market by adding new features to the physical space of the market, including a new commercial kitchen, and by charging stall fees for the first time, to increase the farmers market's budget for management, marketing and upkeep. This last goal caused a power struggle between several vendors and members of the Farmers Market Committee. Vendors complained to city officials in an effort to reverse the Committee's decision, and members of the Committee sought to retain their authority. The struggle illuminated the lack of clarity on who had ultimate decision making power in the market between the Committee and city officials. This inspired market leaders to create the Farmers Market Cooperative, independent of the city and responsible for the farmers market, and this change has led to the creation of a new board of directors with clear functions and responsibilities. This and other changes in governance have brought great results to the market. A professional manager was hired who designed a marketing campaign, organized community events, and redesigned the physical layout of the market space, assigning stall spaces for vendors. As a result of these improvements, market income doubled. Last year alone, the market raised about \$4,000 in fundraising events. This has eased vendors' concerns over the value of a paid market manager, and it has led to improved relationships with the market leaders. The market is much stronger now and tensions have been resolved. Market leaders now hope to focus on the expansion plans they developed coming into this year.

## **Athens Farmers Market: Healthy Markets, Healthy Neighbors**

*Athens, Ohio*

The Athens Farmers Market, located in rural southeast Ohio, serves a wide range of customers. Demographically, the town is composed of a mix of homeowners, low-income residents and public housing tenants, and students from Ohio University. In an effort to increase the patronage of low-income shoppers, especially seniors and individuals and families receiving public assistance, organizers of the Athens Farmers Market partnered with local health and social service organizations, including the local WIC offices, the Metropolitan Housing Authority, Athens County Job and Family Services, community health centers, clinics, and the local hospital. In order to attract people to the market and track them once they arrived, organizers at the Athens Farmers Market created a series of “extra incentive” programs. The Hometown Shopper Card, a frequent shopper card, encourages patrons to branch out both in terms of the products they purchase and the vendors patronize. The Market Discount Program creates discounts on products that are featured in weekly nutritional cooking demonstrations. Both of these programs were widely advertised through the market’s partnerships with local health organizations and the Housing Authority. Additionally, an EBT system was installed at the market and trainings were conducted to familiarize vendors with the new system.

Although the Hometown Shopper program was not as successful as organizers had hoped it would be, they feel confident that with additional marketing of the program more residents will be able to reap the rewards of the program in future market seasons. Their new EBT program, in contrast, was considered a great success: over \$5,000 in EBT was spent at the Athens Farmers Market in the 2007 market season. Organizers attribute much of this success to the strong partnerships that they were able to cultivate over the course of the grant cycle and the high level of buy-in from farmers market vendors.

## **Toledo Farmers Market: Strengthening Our Market for the Next 175 Years**

*Toledo, Ohio*

Located in a “shifting sands” community, the Toledo Farmers Market has long grappled with the challenge of promoting itself as a great community destination in an otherwise disinvested neighborhood. Organizers in Toledo utilized PPS funding to support the development of new activities and public amenities, such as tables and chairs, so to increase the comfort and appeal of the farmers market to the community. Food and health-promoting programs became the focus of their Saturday markets, and a new winter market allowed a variety of vendors—both new and old—to tap into the existing customer base. Additionally, seasonal events, as well as the winter farmers market contributed to the overall economic sustainability of the Toledo Farmers Market. Cooking demonstrations attracted new shoppers and ultimately led to the recruitment of eight new vendors.

In order to reach out to low-income shoppers, Toledo utilized a USDA Community Food Grant to assess the food security needs of residents, implement a coupon program, and provide training to shoppers about how to use their EBT cards at the farmers market. As the first pilot EBT program in the state of Ohio, organizers have been faced with a number of challenges including dispelling misperceptions that the farmers market is less affordable than other food sources in the community. Although the success of this program has been slow moving, they feel confident that regular evaluation will provide insight into ways of improving their system in the future.

## **The Byrd House Market: Satellite Farmers’ Markets, Urban Master Gardeners & Community Gardens: Creatively Building Community & Food Sustainability in Richmond, Virginia**

*Richmond, Virginia*

The William Byrd Community House, a community organization serving the relatively low-income neigh-



borhoods of Oregon Hill, Randolph, and Maymount, applied for funding in order to launch a new market aimed at increasing market access among the community's most disadvantaged groups and engaging diverse cultures in community building and local food system production.

Their major initiatives included a community gardening program, the "We Mean Business" youth entrepreneur program and a partnership with the Virginia Cooperative Extension, an oral history and photo-documentation project, and miscellaneous garden programs. Through these efforts, organizers have succeeded with their community-building and food access goals: now in their second year, the market is averaging over 20 produce, baked goods, and crafts vendors and more than 700 customers per market day.

Despite repeated changes in management, and redefinition of their goals, this farmers market continues to thrive. The William Byrd Community House has integrated this market into their overall community-focused strategy and continues to work to define the market's mission and target audience, and to ensure long-term fiscal sustainability.

### **Fondy Farmers Market: Growing Community Project**

*Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

Since its inception, the Fondy Farmers Market has achieved a number of notable successes. As the largest open air market in Milwaukee, Fondy is one of the main redemption centers for WIC and SFMNP coupons and has been operating an EBT system since 2003. In an effort to increase awareness of their "farm to fork" solution to food insecurity in the low-income neighborhoods surrounding the market, organizers identified three goals in their proposal to PPS: to increase patronage among low-income residents who have been relying on local food pantries; to recruit non-traditional vendors to sell at the market; and to provide regular communication to customers vis-à-vis market-

ing materials and a monthly newsletter. These goals were achieved primarily through the development of collaborative community partnerships, most notably with the Greater Johnson's Park Health Coalition, the Walnut Way Conservation Corporation, and the Salvation Army.

"Taste the Season" events provided opportunities for residents to learn about nutritious seasonal foods, and cooking demonstrations showed participants how to utilize new and different types of produce. The market's two incentive programs, Veggie Vouchers and the discounted cookware coupons, were very successful, with the latter achieving a 90% redemption rate. Youth development opportunities were cultivated through the "Gardens to Market" program and will continue in the future. Finally, non-traditional vendor recruitment efforts were somewhat challenging, but the value of the relationship that Fondy formed with the Walnut Way Conservation Corporation cannot be understated. Next year, non-traditional vendors will expand to include SeedFolks Youth Ministries, and Growing Power.