

Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP)
Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by LFPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to LFPP staff to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-720-0300

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

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. October 1-March 31, 20XX)</i>	April 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016
Today's Date:	October 15, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Cheryal Lee Hills
Authorized Representative Phone:	218.894.3233
Authorized Representative Email:	chills@regionfive.org
Recipient Organization Name:	North Central Economic Development Association (NCEDA)
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	SPROUT Marketplace: Expands access to markets, provides TA for network of over 40 growers who comprise regional food hub business enterprise "SPROUT, MN" – provides education & outreach to growers.
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-MN-0100
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Minnesota
Total Awarded Budget:	\$99,500.00

LFPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

Different individual: Name: _____; Email: _____; Phone: _____

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

1. **State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by LFPP staff.** If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

- i. **Goal/Objective 1: Expand locally grown commodity markets through indoor winter marketplace.**

- a. **Progress Made:** The SPROUT Food Hub’s SPROUT Growers and Makers Marketplace in Little Falls, Minnesota is fully operational and hosted 2 soft openings (November 21 and December 12, 2015) and a Grand Opening, April 1 and 2nd with U. S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, U. S. Representative Rick Nolan, USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development Lisa Mensha, USDA Rural Development State of Minnesota Director, Colleen Landkamer, MN Department of Agriculture Commissioner Dave Frederickson, and over 250 attendees each day.

- b. **Impact on 5 County Region:**

- November market: 895 pounds sold, 91 art items, and \$2,642 in sales. Market demographics consisted of 9 vendors for the first initial market with 53% growers, food producers or processors. Vendors reported 78% satisfaction with their experience in this first and one of its kind markets in this region.
- December market: 202 pounds sold, 179 art items and \$5,943.50. Market demographics consisted of 27 vendors for the second market with 52% growers, food producers or processors. Vendors reported 81% positive feedback with 15% with no response and/or suggestions for improvement.
- Grand Opening Market: 213 pounds and 231 art items sold – yielding \$5,559 in sales. Market demographics consisted of 50 vendors with 70% growers, food producers or processors. 81% of the vendors had positive feedback with only 4 offered suggestions for improvement. **In Total, vendors incomes increased by \$14,144.50 during a time of year when there are no markets for their food and/or art items.**
- Sprout attempted to hold markets during August and September. These markets were not well attended and had few vendors. The lesson learned is that this market will serve the community and its vendors best during the fall and winter months when there is no opportunity for markets vs competing with summer markets.

- ii. **Goal/Objective 2: Training and Technical Assistance offered to producer network and general public.**

- a. **Progress Made:**

1. **Oct. 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015:** 21 growers signed up for and received post-harvest handling training on 3-20-15. Additional training sessions being scheduled next quarter.
2. **April 1 – Sept. 30 2015:** A second grower training was offered June 22, 2015 with 22 growers participating in a one-to-one session held at the

computer labs at Central Lakes College. This unique training allowed growers to work through their on farm food safety plans with trained staff to scan field maps, water testing and other critical documents directly into the on farm food safety plan.

3. **Oct. 1, 2015 to Mar. 31, 2016:** Core 4 business training was held in the classroom area of the marketplace on November 17, 2015. Attendees included for profit, nonprofit, employment, small business, education and artist sectors. The focus of this training was marketing, business planning, securing finances and human resource management. Attendees reported 100% satisfaction with instruction, content and applicability. We continue to work one-on-one with Amish growers to complete on farm food safety plans. We also facilitated training on farmer to institution in collaboration with University of Minnesota and other regional partners on March 7, 2016 with 62 participants from a greater rural region.
4. **April 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2016:** Grower training was focused on one-to-one training with 15 Amish growers and/or grower cooperatives, an increased Latino grower cooperative and at all local farmer's market meetings within the region. Estimated impact: 40 growers. Training focused on pricing strategies, crop selection, estimating yield and transportation logistics.

b. **Impact on 5 County Region:** Growers indicate that they have **greater** capacity to meet the needs of institutional demand for locally grown commodities through their collaboration and technical assistance provided through these opportunities. Not only do they now have completed on farm food safety plans, growers are now asking for additional training on purchasing packing supplies, pricing strategies and strategies for display for greater market potential at the Marketplace.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Advance operations and measurable impacts through non-construction improvements.

a. **Progress Made: Installation** of required plumbing and State of MN inspection was completed. The initial installation of large scale equipment was completed. The kitchens were licensed by the MN Department of Agriculture on March 25th and the facility received its final certificate of occupation on March 29th. We collected surveys from potential users on small ware equipment needs, exploring facility utilization, lease agreements and contracts. At the time of this final report, **we have agreements from 5 local entities for utilization and 17 growers have voiced serious interest in utilization.** We continue to work through layers of licensing and requirements in collaboration with the MN Department of Agriculture on Cottage Food laws.

b. **Impact on 5 County Region:** Numerous growers have the capacity to sell value added through MN Statutes at community farmer's markets. MN statute requires growers to follow through with additional food safety training if their gross sales are over \$5000/year. As previously stated, we continue to navigate the licensing regulations to ensure that we are fulfill our regulatory requirements with respect to food safety, licensing, insurance, liability, etc. We continue to envision that we will have the ability to fill this market with

producers who have received all of the necessary training and technical assistance necessary to continue to build capacity in the market channel of value added, in addition to sale of whole commodities in addition to revenue for Sprout through marketplace lease of space (floor space, kitchen rental, and controlled storage rental).

iv. Goal/Objective 4: Increase domestic – regional consumption of regionally produced agricultural products.

a. **Progress Made:** 4 school districts and 2 large scale summer resorts are purchasing local commodities through SPROUT Grower collaborative. More than 40 persons (superintendents, food service directors for schools and assisted living) have toured the marketplace to discuss potential for sales through farm to school and/or institution. **Three** hospitals are offering a unique prescription CSA program (Choose Health) and reaching more than 150 low income families. In total, the SPROUT Grower Collaborative alone enabled growers to produce and sell ~60,000 pounds of commodities and earn an estimated \$30,000.00 in this program alone.

b. **Impact on 5 county region:** 3.0 jobs created/retained, 9 markets expanded, 72 farmer/producer beneficiaries participating, \$77,000.00 dollar amount changes in market sales, \$15,000.00 dollars leveraged/invested back into grower training. These innovative programs are allowing not only our institutions greater engagement, but are building capacity for small family farmers in rural areas in Central Minnesota and community impact when consumers are receiving product from their farmer/neighbors. See above for estimated impact to small growers with these three programs alone.

v. Goal/Objective 5: Outreach to stakeholders and regional (Central MN) community buyers and consumers.

a. **Progress Made:** Numerous chambers of commerce/convention and visitor bureaus and arts organizations are at the table in community-wide discussions on creative placemaking opportunities through investment in marketplace. The open marketplace dates have been promoted widely by local television, print media (17 print media outlets), 12 grower farmer's markets and/or organizations, and emailed widely through contacts of economic development, arts organizations, chambers of commerce, visitor and convention bureaus, farmer's market association, sustainable farming association, social media, and personal email contacts. Wide scale media promotion was established for the Grand Opening. As mentioned earlier, guests included with U. S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, U. S. Representative Rick Nolan, USDA Under-Secretary for Rural Development Lisa Mensha, USDA Rural Development State of Minnesota Director, Colleen Landkamer, MN Department of Agriculture Commissioner Dave Frederickson. This shows we have been able to garner local, state and national champions in support of our work.

b. **Impact on 5 county region:** We have many venues and partners tapped to promote open MarketPlace and SPROUT Grower Collaborative on an ongoing basis. (Beyond term of grant). Because of the widespread public relations

created through the above marketing channels, the community (as well as state and national Champions) are more aware of the marketplace and will have greater capacity to purchase commodities during the winter months. The stakeholders have promoted the marketplace widely and are receiving positive feedback from the community. The market outreach WILL increase access to locally sourced foods. Surveys from market attendees reveal the following:

November 21, 2015 market:

249 attendees, 72 completed surveys for a 29% return rate. The number one reason they stated they attended was to buy local (51%) and outreach was through Facebook (67%) or a personal friend/contact (44%). (Attendees were allowed to choose all media outreach methods that applied).

December 12, 2015 market:

280 attendees, 55 completed surveys for a 20% return rate. The number one reason they stated they attended was to buy local (43%) and outreach was through Facebook (31%) or a personal friend/contact (50%). (Attendees were allowed to choose all media outreach methods that applied).

April 1 and 2, 2016 Market 250 attendees per day, 33 completed surveys for a 13% return rate. The number one reasons they attended was to buy local (51%). Facebook was the most effective marketing tool in that 18 of the 33 (57%) heard about the event through Facebook. Friend or word of mouth was the 2nd most effective marketing strategy in that 27% learned about the event through "Friend/Word of Mouth".

Sprout attempted to hold markets during August and September. These markets were not well attended and had few vendors. The lesson learned is that this market will serve the community and its vendors best during the fall and winter months when there is no opportunity for markets vs competing with summer markets.

- vi. **Goal/Objective 6: Market opportunity for farm/range operations and consumers.**
 - a. **Progress Made:** As we have now finalized the all of the construction and large equipment, we are now focusing on facility utilization through survey tools, market research, and industry standards. This data is imperative to collect prior to moving forward to advance utilization. We continue to expect exemplary performance by not only grower participation, but consumer participation and access to locally grown foods in the winter months.
 - b. **Impact on 5 county region:** Controlled storage at this facility has allowed us to scale up purchasing of shelf stable items for winter distribution. 17 growers are expressing serious interest in facility utilization for value added and are preparing business plans for market expansion in anticipation of full scale utilization expected no later than October 31, 2016 when all markets seize and value added processing will begin in earnest.

vii. Goal/Objective 7: Execute the evaluation plan includes hour Sprout will continue evaluation beyond the term of the grant project.

a. **Progress Made:** As we stated in all our reports, evaluation is the key to our success. We are measuring the impact of our technical assistance to growers by surveys, and are scaling up potential trainings as a direct result of the next logical progression in marketing local foods. We have measurable results indicating that growers do have greater capacity to participate in institutional markets and are working with the MN Department of Agriculture and educational partners to expand grower technical skills partners to provide training and technical assistance as the food regulations, rules and statutes continue to evolve. Now that the processing facility is fully functional, we will expand measurement from basic pounds procured and distributed, to increased sales of processed value added agricultural commodities, in addition to the market channels provided with the marketplace.

b. **Impact on 5 county region: Our evaluation consultant helped us build our evaluation skills, expertise and systems and we will continue to use these skills beyond the grant period.** There are many measures we track; pounds sold, growers trained and how they've utilized the training to expand their operations and more. Beyond the expectation of USDA/LFPP: our team deployed measurement of the 8 forms of wealth and asset we grew including: Built, Financial, Individual, Intellectual, Natural, Political, Social and Cultural. We will continue to measure outcomes associated with growth in grower income, consumer attendance, and additional pounds sold during marketplace operations. Consumers will have greater access to locally grown food through the marketplace, and this is a highly regarded and measurable outcome.

viii. Goal/Objective 8: Training and TA delivered to producer network and general public.

a. Progress Made:

1. **Oct. 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015:** 21 growers signed up for and received post-harvest handling training on 3-20-15. At least 3 growers have scaled up operations through investment in marketplace activities. 40 persons (superintendents, food service directors for schools and assisted living) tour of marketplace to discuss potential for sales through farm to school/institution scheduled for 3-20-15.
2. **April 1 – Sept. 30 2015:** Please see above with respect to grower training. As a result of the growing work within the community in building the marketplace and processing facilities, Sprout and its staff have participated in the following community engagement opportunities:
 - a. Apr 2, 2015 – Participated in roundtable discussion with Central Lakes College to build a Horticulture/Local Foods program.
 - b. April 2015 – Met with school superintendents and food service directors from four districts to discuss scaling up Farm to School and/or embarking on Farm to School. As a result, Sprout is now coordinating Farm to School for two new districts in the reporting period.
 - c. May 2015 – Participated in Healthy Financing for Health Communities roundtable discussion in St. Paul to strategize

- access to capital for small family farmers in order to sustain and build food systems in Minnesota.
- d. May 7, 2015 – Presented to 85 USDA staff on the value chain of local foods in Central Minnesota.
 - e. May 9, 2015 – Presented at regional Farmer’s Union meeting the concept of Sprout, its value to building small family farmer incomes and community food systems.
 - f. May 21, 2015 – Design Meeting held at the warehouse facility where 7 growers and 11 community participants engaged in development of the design of the facility. This group included economic development, nutrition educators, artists, growers, chamber of commerce, architectural firm, elected officials and USDA staff.
 - g. May 26, 2015 – Hosted a personal tour of the facility with Senator Amy Klobuchar and numerous elected officials to advise on the concept of this facility and inform our elected officials on its development.
 - h. May 27, 2015 – Attended the Women in Agriculture Summit in St. Paul, MN hosted by Senator Amy Klobuchar and attended by Statewide Directors of USDA, FSA and NRCS – among other highly regarded women in agriculture. Food hubs and their contributions to small family farmers was a topic of discussion.
 - i. May 31, 2015 – Rooting Opportunity Conference, Washington, DC. This conference allowed sharing of best practices in our community food work with Choose Health, and created continued opportunity to learn from practitioners from across the nation who are working to create access to locally grown foods.
 - j. September 22, 2015 – Hosted the Statewide Food and Agriculture Council attended by Statewide representatives of USDA Rural Development, Farm Services Agency, and Natural Resources Conservation Services; University of Minnesota; Region Five Development Commission; Central Lakes College; Minnesota Department of Health; Public Health; Initiative Foundation; and representatives from Senator Klobuchar and Senator Franken’s offices. This meeting was an open agenda meeting to discuss significant changes and how we can leverage resources and pool together for agency effectiveness. Sprout spoke specifically on strengthening Farm to School, particularly related to the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act support and sustainment. See attached Guest Opinion printed in the local newspaper written by Sprout Food Hub Manager, Arlene Jones on September 21, 2015.
 - k. March 23 and March 24, 2015- A two day training was held for the general public, economic development professionals, marketing professionals, and elected officials on distributed leadership management and the Wealthworks framework we are currently deploying and utilizing in measuring this work.

These two day trainings were facilitated by local staff in economic development, cooperative purchasing services and the manager of Sprout. **There were 45 professionals who attended this training.**

3. **April 1, 2016 – Sept. 30, 2016** - Grower training was focused on one-to-one training with 15 Amish growers and/or grower cooperatives, an increased Latino grower cooperative and at all local farmer's market meetings within the region. Estimated impact: 40 growers. Training focused on pricing strategies, crop selection, estimating yield and transportation logistics.
4. **April 1, 2016 – May 2016:** Participated in numerous meetings to draft legislative language for the Minnesota Good Food Access Fund, which funded the Minnesota Department of Agriculture \$250,000.00 for its first year to appropriate funding for technical assistance to scale up capacity for point of sale outlets for access to healthy food.

b. Impact on 5 county region: As stated in previous reports, there has been tremendous support of this project by numerous communities throughout this rural region. Consumers are and will continue to have greater access to locally grown commodities. The technical assistance and community public relations **has expanded markets for our growers and is gaining ground in building a viable/sustainable/profitable marketplace.**

ix. **New April 1, 2015** Goal/Objective 9: Improve access to healthy locally grown commodities.

a. **Progress Made:** We are proud of what we have accomplished through this grant. In summary, grower trainings have expanded markets. We have collaborated with numerous agencies to continue to advance marketing and promotion of the marketplace, and have partnered with numerous agencies in nutrition education. Specifically, we have worked to get area children out to local farms to see where their food comes from, participate in harvest, and are reinforcing this message by scheduling growers into classrooms and promotion of Farm to School through media production. The innovative Choose Health Program has been expanded to two additional hospital systems for 2016, impacting numerous low income households and advancing production capacity to growers. Continued progress on the controlled storage facility and marketplace will continue to increase consumer access to healthy, locally grown commodities.

Sprout and its staff spend considerable amounts of time participating in community meetings, engaging stakeholders, and building continued commitment to supporting local procurement. In addition to the numerous data points above, numerous farmer's markets in the region are now accepting EBT (including Sprout), have expanded access to low income citizens through the Choose Health program and its sister programs, have signed up for matching market bucks through funds appropriated through the MN Legislature, and continue to participate in numerous local initiatives to expand access to healthy locally grown commodities. We have secured a Memorandum of Understanding

with a local hospital system to utilize the Sprout facility for nutrition education to citizens WEEKLY in collaboration with the University of Minnesota Extension SNAP Educators, and are working with a local school district, whose summer gardens will be processed in the Sprout facility for Farm to School 2016-2017.

b. Impact on 5 county region: See above.

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (**the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2014**). Include further explanation if necessary.

	Oct. 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015	April 1 to Sept. 30 2015	Oct. 1, 2015 to Mar. 31, 2016	April 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2016	TOTAL
i. Number of direct jobs created:	1	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
ii. Number of jobs retained:	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
iii. Number of indirect jobs created	Not Measured at this time	Not Measured at this time	Not Measured at this time	.5	.5
iv. Number of markets expanded: from the beginning of the grant award:	* 2 Farm to School * Potential for Numerous farm to institution markets	* 4 Farm to School * 2 Farm to Hospital Systems * 1 Farm to Food Cooperative	* 4 new Farm to school markets * 2 Farm to Hospital Systems * 1 Farm to Food Cooperative * Increase in Hospital System Supported CSA	*10 new Farm to school markets *3 Farm to Hospital Systems * 2 Farm to Food Cooperative with 3 new food cooperatives starts	105%
v. Number of new markets established	See Above	Same as Markets Expanded	2 large summer resorts 1 food cooperative	Same as Markets expanded	
vi. Market sales included by:					
• Number	\$20,000	\$36,000	\$30,625	\$47,000	\$77,000 as of end of grant period
• Percent	21%	36.5%	43.8%	15.3%	28.6%

v. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project					
• Number	40	51	61	75	75
• Percent	20%	22%	31%	18.7%	53%

3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?
 - i. SPROUT MN Marketplace is dedicated to providing access to equitable markets for all growers. To date, we are working with over 75 growers, 35% are ethnic groups (Latino or Amish) and 40% are farms primarily operated by women. The diversification of market streams includes farm to: Restaurant, School, Institution, Daycare, Healthcare, Assisted Living, Food Cooperatives, Direct to Consumer and CSA.
 - ii. Sprout’s focus always has been dedicated to fair and equitable markets for all growers, and has a specific focus on Amish, Latino and Tribal growers. We are also working with numerous farms operated primarily by women. We continue to advance our work within the daycare structure, and finished the 2016 summer season with two school district’s summer feeding programs, impacting children from our region’s highest free and reduced districts.
 - iii. Sprout increased market channels by increasing CSA Prescriptive Program and adding one new additional food cooperative and two large summer resorts. In a recent report, Sprout’s demographic of grower profile reveals: **Currently working with over 75 independent growers, 35% of them on farms primarily operated by women, 15 Amish family farms and 15 Latino growers.**

4. Discuss your community partnerships.
 - i. Who are your community partners? Region Five Development Commission, Central Lakes College, University of Minnesota Extension, Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, Renewing the Countryside, Sustainable Farming Association, Northwest Area Foundation, Otto Bremer Foundation, Bush Foundation, National Joint Powers Alliance, Initiative Foundation, Community Economic Development, Minnesota Farmer’s Market Association, EnSearch, Inc., numerous county public health departments, and numerous hospital systems in purchasing and staff development through educational opportunities.
 - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project? In addition to funding, providing opportunities for cross-organizational technical assistance to growers, cross sponsoring events, public speaking opportunities to promote local foods through collaboration, providing countless hours of staff resources, staff in kind and continued promotion of the Marketplace.
 - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project’s future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant? See above.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? Yes, we have a small contract for evaluation with EnSearch, Inc. The

evaluation plan developed in partnership with EnSearch, Inc., is extensive and allows us to measure how we are achieving the WealthWorks 8 forms of rural wealth.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*
- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? Print media, bulletin boards, social media, email, listserv, websites, newsletters. Recent Impact Analysis Study published by the University of MN on the regional economic multiplier impact of Sprout.
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results? Local papers (list available upon request), Facebook, websites, partner newsletters and our Resilient Region Champions as well as regional residents and organizations. Also, a premiere article written in the Labor Day section of the local newspaper.

<http://www.brainerddispatch.com/basic-page/3841375-2016-brainerd-lakes-area-progress-edition>

- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?
 - a. **Oct. 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015:** No way to directly track – hundreds/thousands
 - b. **April 1 to Sept. 30 2015:** Unable to track, potentially thousands.
 - c. **Oct. 1, 2015 to Mar. 31, 2016:** Unable to track, potentially thousands.
 - d. **April 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2016:** Utilizing social media, Sprout was able to reach 4,990 people with 43 responses on average for each market.

*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?
 - i. If so, how did you collect the information? Evaluations have been completed for all grower trainings held as well as at the Sprout Marketplace events from attendees and vendors.
 - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?
 - a. In summary, we have learned from our grower trainings that the reasons are growers are attending include: “Age and lack of employees are changing my needs. We do 3 farmers' markets per week -- too much time away from farm – ““I have started a farm market in my local town along with selling off the farm (greenhouse)”. We have received high marks for our trainings. We also heard from attendees at the markets that the reasons they are attending include: (Marketplace) *Buy local and organic. Support Sprout. Curiosity, potential business opportunities. Anxious to see plans for the space. Want to support local.*

8. Budget Summary:

- i. As part of the LFPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report: submitted separately from this narrative
- ii. Did the project generate any income?
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

	Oct. 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015	April 1 to Sept. 30 2015	Oct. 1, 2015 to Mar. 31, 2016	April 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2016	Total
Generate Income?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
How Much?	\$26,000	\$36,000	\$66,625	\$77,000	\$205,625

- a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? The project funds were used for personnel, which allowed us to build capacity with buyers and to continue to build capacity with the Marketplace and provide grower technical assistance. Approximately \$26,000 in building farm to school, farm to institution and CSA programs in the fall of 2014. Revenue was generated by utilization of staff person to build interest in farm to school and farm to institution (hospital and assisted living) and through a winter CSA program and in working with regional partners in curriculum selection for grower training. Approximately \$70,000 of the total grant award was used for working capital/staff time to generate markets and evaluation, earning \$205,625 in revenue for the entire two year grant period.

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).
 - a. The innovation of the Choose Health Program, and how it has been received nationally, has exceeded our expectations. Our community partnership with University of Minnesota Extension Community Nutrition Educators and Public Health has allowed our work to impact numerous school-aged children with Farm to School, Farmers in classrooms and children on farms. With this growth, we have successfully expanded markets for growers, and continue to embark on numerous potential buyer relationships. While delay of the marketplace has been trying, we believe that the delays actually were a benefit to expanding markets for our local growers and artisans, more completely engaged our local growers and artisans in the design of the market space, enabled to generate additional resources, and build momentum and awareness. Additionally, the winter CSA program has been sustained by three hospital systems for food insecure individuals, adding another ~\$30,000.00 in revenue post grant period.
- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:

- a. The Advisory Committee postponed opening of marketplace until there were more sufficient resources for construction and buildout of the facility **and** an Artisan Advisory Group was created in order to be more fully inclusive and include regional partners such as chambers of commerce and convention and visitors bureaus to help market the destination and to capture the tourism component of creative placemaking.
 - b. Physical infrastructure turned out to be an unforeseen circumstance which prevented meeting measureable results as expected. However, intentional engagement of all community stakeholders turned out to be a positive change of a setback in bringing numerous voices, ideas, intentions, hopes and promotion of this project to the forefront of successful community collaboration. We were finally able to launch and have built momentum that will help make this effort sustainable.
- iii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:

We grew sales for growers by participating in a winter CSA through a local hospital system and focused on growing this market stream for the winter of 2014-15. Good news was that 2 other groups of over 40 regional leaders toured the Marketplace and have committed a variety of resources (new institutional buyers such as hospitals wanting to purchase additional good as well as volunteers) to make this regional effort a success. Somewhat related and perhaps interesting: we have secured an Americorp VISTA who will work on the volunteer recruitment of individuals who are interested in Gleaning (also called “ag Rescue”) commodities that might otherwise rot in the fields we can process at the SPROUT Marketplace and processing facility for hunger prevention programs throughout the region – these programs are often also supported by USDA. To date, approximately 1,800 pounds of produce have been gleaned through this program and will add to the sustainability of the prescriptive CSA program beyond the term of this grant period.

10. Future Work:

- i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project’s work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you’d like to share about the future of your project.
 - a. Community impact and outreach has been tremendously successful with numerous agencies cross promoting this project. We are continually seeking advancing markets by promoting success in Farm to School, Farm to Institution, and in the economic sustainability of our growers as we advance technical skills. It is estimated that opening of the completed facility will provide the region with additional jobs, but also jobs on our small family farms as growers continue to scale up.
 - b. The facility utilization phase of this project is fully underway. We are confident that growers will increase market channels through value added capacity, and through adding jobs on our small family farms as growers continue to scale up.

ii. Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals?

a. As we build momentum in Farm to School, future objectives may well include measurement of not only increase pounds sold, but increased consumption, food system awareness, and food choices.

The economic impact of local foods in Central Minnesota project has been released. A link to that can be found [here](#). Two of Sprout's staff were reviewers and on the project planning team for this report, which was funded by the University of Minnesota. Additionally, we are actively pursuing collaboration with other rural regional food hubs in shared service agreements, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture in the potential facilitation of an oversight committee as we navigate the multiple levels of business management, food safety, and strategic planning. This initiative has been funded by a Specialty Crop Grant and Sprout will actively participate in this endeavor. Additionally, the new report from the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality will soon release its report on the economic contribution of the Sprout Food Hub. A final report can be found on the Region Five website at <http://regionfive.org/cms/files/Economic%20Contribution%20of%20the%20Sprout%20Food%20Hub.pdf>.