

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



LOCAL
ENVIRONMENTAL
AGRICULTURE
PROJECT



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

LEAP continues to grow, shift, and change. I am forever thankful for the committed locavores who say yes to local food, the LEAP team who always keeps farmers and community members front and center, the farmers to who continue growing food to feed us despite the challenges, the community partners and funders who trust us to create a more resilient food system, and LEAP Board members who volunteer their time and energy to guide the organization.

As I finish up my fifth year with LEAP, I reflect on the early days when I was the sole staff person trying to learn about the beauty, struggles, strength, and commitment of the people and community around me. In 2018, as a team of seven people and countless volunteers, I am proud of and humbled by the work we have done in Roanoke and beyond. As farming follows a natural ebb and flow, so does LEAP with challenges, opportunities, and successes. We moved our food hub (for the 3rd time!) and worked hard to plan for the future of the hub, we expanded and restructured our staff in order to better meet our growing needs, and we received a large-scale Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant on behalf of the statewide Virginia Fresh Match network to expand matching programs for SNAP (food stamp) participants at farmers markets and grocery retail outlets.

Over the course of the year, I worked closely with the LEAP Board and team members to re-work the organizational structure and team member responsibilities to meet LEAP's growing needs. Starting in October 2018, LEAP shifted from a more traditional Executive Director structure to a co-leadership model. Sam Lev (started with LEAP in 2015) is now the Director of Programs and Operations and I am now the Director of Strategic Planning, formerly the Executive Director. This co-leadership model helps us meet the wide-ranging demands of a small organization that works both locally and statewide.

As we begin to celebrate and enjoy the tastes of the upcoming season, I want to thank each of you for your important role in nourishing healthy community and creating resilient local food systems.



Maureen McNamara Best

DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC PLANNING

2018 BY THE NUMBERS

\$328K+

in gross sales at all
LEAP sales outlets

65+

Participating
local farms

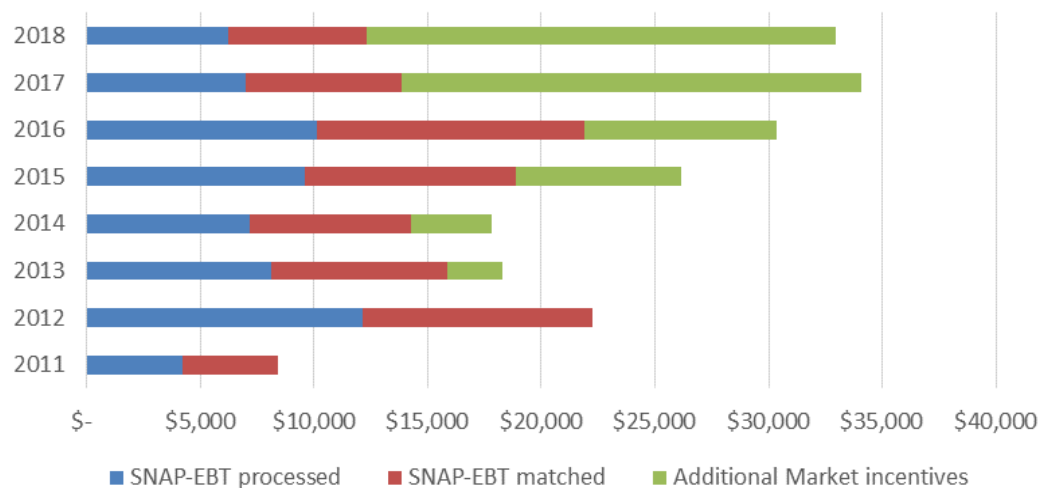
\$32K+

in Healthy Food
Incentives (HFI)
redeemed

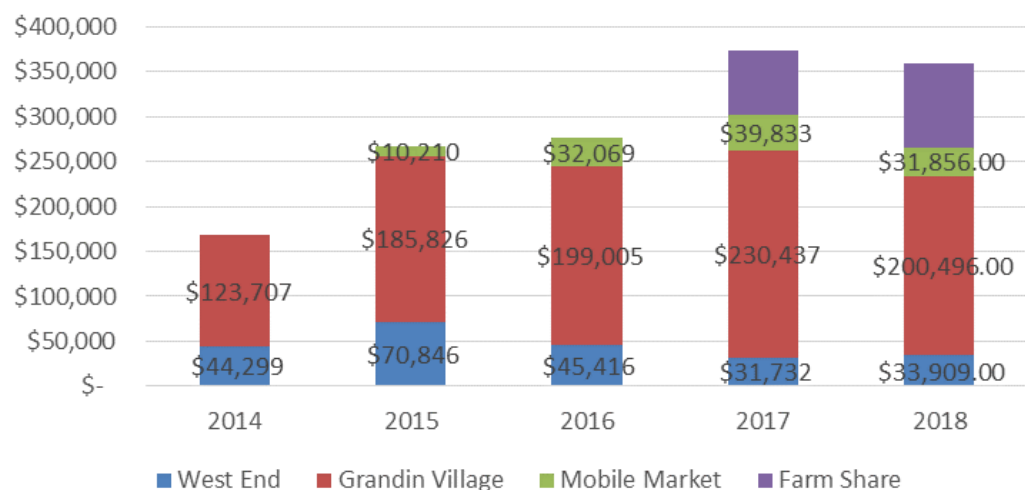
96%

of HFI recipients
increased their fruit
and vegetable
consumption
because of program

Healthy Food Incentive Program at LEAP Markets



Comparative Gross Sales at Grandin Village, West End and LEAP Mobile Market



Program report:

LEAP KITCHEN

In 2018, the LEAP Kitchen welcomed new businesses, launched innovative ideas, and supported unique opportunities for entrepreneurs and educators throughout Roanoke. We began a series of monthly food business educational events on topics like record keeping, social media marketing, and branding. This year, the “Made in the LEAP Kitchen” brand came to life, making it easier for members to sell value-added products in local stores. Our 33 members in 2018 included new food trucks with exciting menus, veteran-, minority-, and immigrant-owned businesses, and first-time entrepreneurs stepping into the business world with energy and drive.

In addition to helping food businesses grow, the LEAP Kitchen is a key part of the community infrastructure. Educational partners including House of Bread, Roanoke Community Garden Association, and Virginia Cooperative Extension continued to use the LEAP Kitchen to offer child and adult educational opportunities related to health, nutrition, cooking, and food service. And the LEAP Kitchen provided food prep space for Local Colors festival participants who hosted a Roanoke Sister Cities Korean food event and gathering and prep space for community suppers co-hosted by the Roanoke Co+op.



"LEAP is a wonderful resource for newcomers and veterans in the food industry! They provide guidance, business opportunities, sustainability, assist with the ins and outs of food service, and provide affordable kitchen rental space."
- LEAP Kitchen member

33

member businesses
& organizations

60+

classes & events
hosted

1K+

hours commercial
production time

Program report:

MARKETS

LEAP's fixed site farmers markets in Grandin Village and the West End continue to be vibrant, diverse market places and community centers. The West End Farmers Market is always evolving to grow and support new businesses. Market incentives sales (SNAP and Medicaid Double Value and more) grew by 18% in 2018. Despite what seemed like constant rain, vendors and customers alike at the Grandin Village Farmers Market persevered and showed how resilient our local food system is, injecting over \$200,000 into the local food economy.

In 2018, special events at both markets brought together local food producers, local businesses, and community members. Chefs at local restaurants like Local Roots and Rockfish offered tastings at our annual Tomato Fest highlighting local produce. The Farmers Market Bike Crawl, held during National Farmers Market Week in August, led local food enthusiasts on a bike ride to 4 Roanoke-area farmers markets. That same August week, Vice Mayor Joe Cobb joined the West End Farmers Market to proclaim Roanoke Farmers Market Week, showing support for the economic and health impacts farmers markets make on their communities.

32+
Vendors

12K+
Customers at Grandin
Village & West End (est.)

\$235K+
In Gross Vendor Sales



"LEAP has mastered the art of the small neighborhood farmers market. The investment that many residents make by visiting the market on a weekly basis is a testament to the consistency and value that the market offers. "

– Market vendor

Program report: 2018 FARM SHARE — & FOOD HUB

LEAP has operated a mini food hub since 2015, which serves the LEAP Mobile Market and the LEAP Farm Share. In 2018, LEAP distributed over \$140,000 in local foods. The LEAP Farm Share added even more Farm Share members in 2018 and introduced the exciting Winter Share, extending the season with locally crafted food products, storage crops, meats, and more. New membership perks included canning workshops to help sharers preserve their bounty and an end-of-season potluck.

In April, our small food hub moved into a new facility at Heritage Point (owned by Roanoke Co+op) where we are better able to store, pack and distribute local foods. LEAP, in collaboration with farmers and key food stakeholders, is planning for the expansion of this facility into a full-fledged food hub that serves more farmers, moves more local food, and meets the growing wholesale demand for local food.

217
Shares
Purchased

30+
Small Farms and Food
Businesses Supported

\$92K+
Spent on local food



To farmers, the connection to those who eat our food, our win-win relationship with end-use customers, is very important. One of the great passions of farming is promoting health in our communities, and fresh, nutritious foods are at the helm of all human wellness. Wellness for consumers, wellness for small farmers, food security and economic security for the whole community—that's what CSA is all about.” - Local farmer

Program report:

MOBILE MARKET

The LEAP Mobile Market provides fresh, local fruits and vegetables to people who live in low-income, low-access communities throughout Roanoke. In 2018, the LEAP Mobile Market added three great new stops -- along 11th Street NW, Civic Mall/Department of Social Services, and Morningside Manor. To highlight the equitable access that the LEAP Mobile Market strives to provide, Healthy Food Incentive purchases accounted for over half of the total sales on the Mobile Market and our shoppers overwhelmingly report increased consumption of fruits and vegetables as well as overall healthier eating habits.

Our big green truck also serves as a great outreach tool at events that support healthy eating. Special visits to the Carilion Clinic Urban Farm, Greenvale School, and Blue Ridge Behavioral Health helped us reach new customers and share our love of fresh, local foods with diverse members of our community.

11

Weekly stops in low-income, low-access neighborhoods

3,346

Transactions

\$32K

In sales of local food

51%

of sales were Healthy Food Incentives distributed to low-income shoppers

“This has been a great opportunity for me to get fresh fruits, fresh vegetables. I use them to cook. I look forward to this every week. It’s great! I’m going to keep coming back every week.”
– Mobile Market customer



Program report:

HEALTHY FOOD INCENTIVES

LEAP's Healthy Food Incentives, which began with SNAP Double Value, ensure that purchasing healthy, fresh food is not a privilege based on your income, but instead is an opportunity accessible to all. At the end of each market season, we evaluate our Healthy Food Incentive programs, identify unmet needs, and plan how to better serve our community members. In 2018, based on community feedback, we fine-tuned and committed to doubling cash purchases by Medicaid recipients, piloted in 2017. Weekly vouchers for low income seniors expanded to a second location, and a new collaboration with CHIP allows their families to redeem weekly \$10 vouchers for local foods at LEAP markets.



4K+

HFI transactions

\$33K

in Healthy Food
Incentives redeemed

96%

of HFI recipients
increased their fruit and
vegetable consumption
because of program

100%

of HFI recipients strongly
agree with the statement:
"I feel welcome at this
market."

"The LEAP [Healthy Food Incentive] program is very critical to my health and well-being. Being provided with local, organic, and biologically-grown produce at an affordable cost helps me maintain a better quality of life."

- HFI recipient

Program report: **VIRGINIA FRESH MATCH**

After working hard to build a strong statewide network of stakeholders and farmers markets dedicated to expanding food access, LEAP was awarded a three-year, \$1.8 million USDA FINI (Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive) grant on behalf of the Virginia Fresh Match network to provide SNAP incentives to farmers market across the Commonwealth. In 2018, 45 partner markets doubled the value of purchases made by SNAP users. Additionally, Virginia Fresh Match piloted grocery retail SNAP incentives for fruits and vegetables at the Friendly City Food Coop in Harrisonburg.

This federal grant will help create a stronger statewide food system by helping farmers markets build capacity, increasing revenue for small farms and food businesses, and ensuring affordable access to healthy foods for SNAP recipients.

\$251,671

in Healthy Food Incentives
redeemed statewide

2,600+

SNAP customers

45

Locations

555

VA Farmers benefitted



“It helps us incorporate healthier options at more affordable prices. Some people don’t have the luxury of certain things, and fresh fruits and vegetables can be a luxury.”

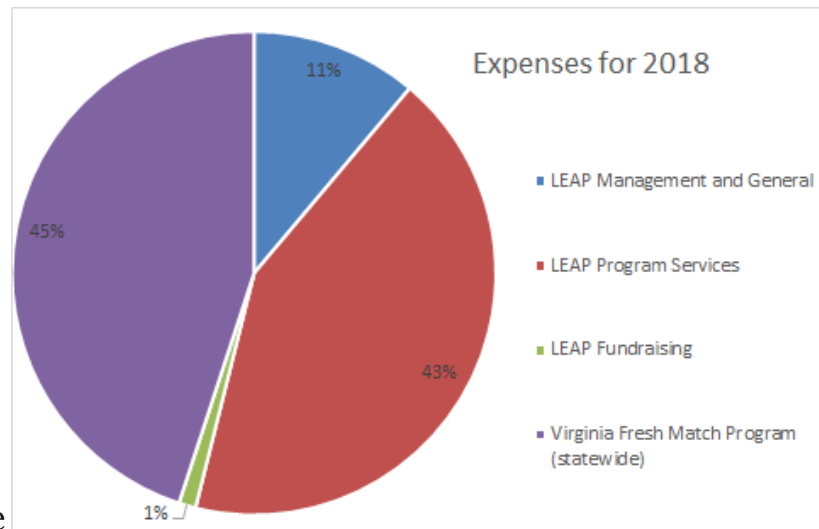
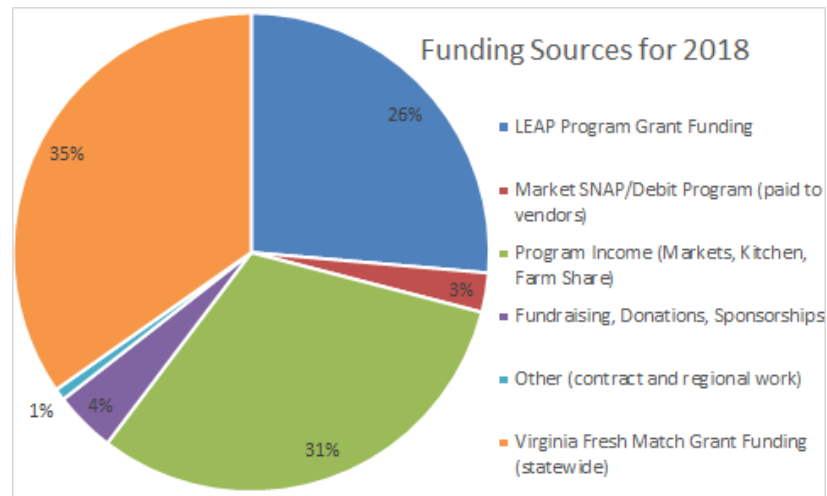
– SNAP shopper

2018 ORGANIZATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORT

LEAP's finances changed significantly in 2018 due to the federal FINI grant that LEAP manages on behalf of the statewide Virginia Fresh Match network. LEAP, as the fiscal agent and grant lead, is responsible for and handles the funds for this 3-year \$1.8 Million grant. Virginia Fresh Match represented a third (35%) of LEAP's income in 2018. However, over 90% of the Virginia Fresh Match funds (45% of LEAP expenses) pass through LEAP to the 8 Virginia Fresh Match Regional Leads across the state (who work with over 60 farmers markets!), the grant evaluator, and our national technical expert consultant.

Excluding Virginia Fresh Match funds and costs, income and expenses for LEAP's local work have stayed relatively constant from 2017 to 2018. We continue to increase

our earned income revenue streams (39%) to help cover program and overhead costs so that we are not overly dependent on any one grant or funding stream. Grants (26%) are incredibly important in the start-up and launch of new programs and in programs, especially our wide offering of healthy food incentives, that directly serve our community members. Grants, earned income, donations, sponsorships all allow LEAP to keep our programs our top priority. Costs to run the LEAP Mobile Market, LEAP Kitchen, Grandin and West End Farmers Markets, Healthy Food Incentives, and Farm Share represent the majority of LEAP expenses (43% of total, 78% of LEAP's non-Virginia Fresh Match expenses).



2018 BOARD & STAFF

Brent Cochran
Board President

Susan Clark
Board Vice President

Dave Prosser
Board Treasurer

Pat Young
Board Secretary

Betty Bailey

Laura Reilly

Christina Nifong

Diane Elliot

Maureen Best
Director, Strategic Planning

Sam Lev
Director, Programs & Operations

Kelly Key
Program Coordinator

Ned Savage
Community Outreach Specialist

Sam Hedges
Program Grant Manager

Davey Rogner
Mobile Market Manager

Connie Kenny Smith
Market Manager

Mission: To nurture healthy communities and
resilient local food systems.

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