

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



LOCAL
ENVIRONMENTAL
AGRICULTURE
PROJECT

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am honored to work with an amazing team of people at LEAP, awed by the committed farmers and food producers in our region, constantly thankful for the consumers who love local food, and inspired by partner organizations and individuals who collaborate to address real needs in our community. Thank you!

In 2017, we have continued to work together to meet our mission to nourish healthy communities and resilient local food systems. For me, the highlights include: “official” launch of the Virginia Fresh Match statewide nutrition incentive network; Farmer Listening Sessions and start of the Consumer Education and Food Hub Action Teams; successful first season of LEAP Farm Share; continued growth of West End and Grandin Village Farmers Markets; and uptick in membership and use of The LEAP Kitchen.

As my partner and I raise our son in Roanoke, I love watching him eat his way through the seasons. Berry-stained shirts, dirt-filled fingernails from the garden, pure joy wandering around the market, (saying hi to everyone!), and tasting all that Roanoke has to offer. You all play a special part in making our community and food system better and stronger. But, we aren’t done yet!

Change doesn’t happen overnight. We have to work today for what we want our world to look like in five, ten, twenty, fifty years. Economic forces and priorities; local, state, and federal policies; land and water use and availability; neighborhood, urban, rural and regional planning; infrastructure development; farmers and food producers; and businesses and individuals can and do sway the future of food and agriculture in our local and regional community. Let’s continue to create communities where we can all thrive and live our best lives.



Maureen McNamara Best

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2017 BY THE NUMBERS

\$373K+

in gross sales at all LEAP sales outlets

60+

Participating local farms

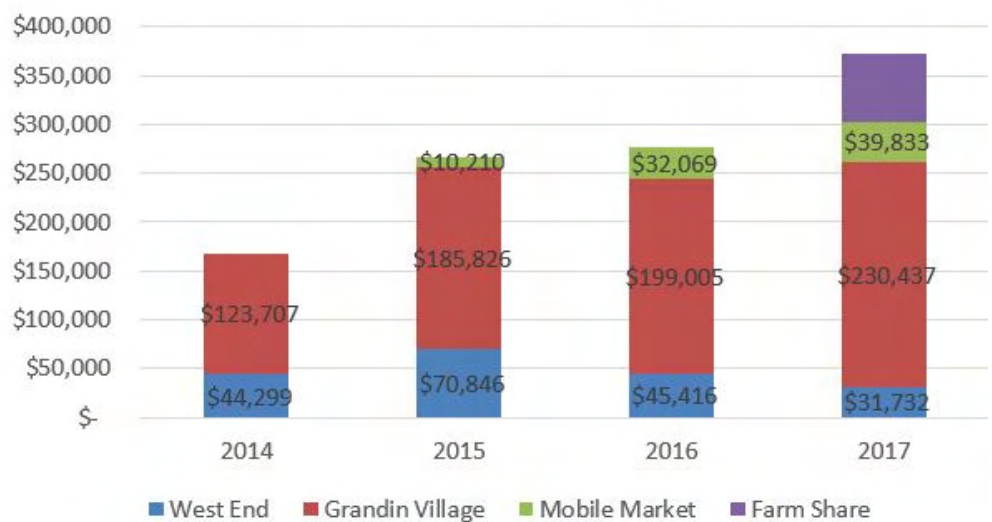
\$35K

in Healthy Food Incentives (HFI) redeemed

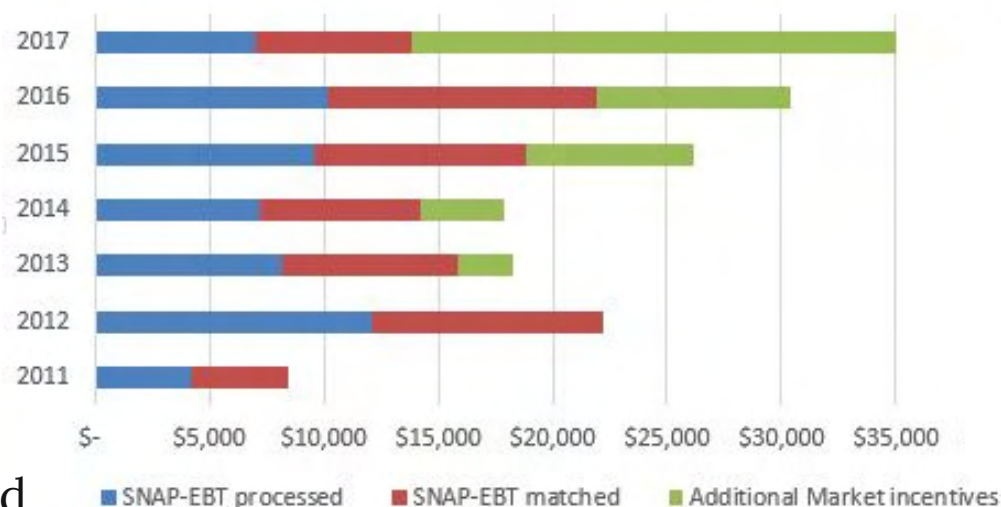
82%

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

Comparative Gross Sales of LEAP Programs



Healthy Food Incentive Program at LEAP Markets



Program report:

FARM SHARE

New to LEAP in 2017 was the Farm Share. With the re-organization of a major CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture) supplier to Roanoke, LEAP filled the void by packaging and distributing weekly shares of fresh fruits and vegetables to local consumers. One of our key partners with the Farm Share was Carilion Clinic, who offered an innovative employee wellness program which included payroll deduction for LEAP Farm Shares and a convenient pickup location on site.

Through the Farm Share, LEAP was able to continue to support over 30 small-scale local farmers who otherwise may have lost an important market for their fresh produce.

141
Shares
Purchased

32+
Small Farms
Supported

\$70K+
Spent on local food

"I love supporting the local economy and providing my children with fresh, healthy foods!"

- Farm Share customer



Program report:

FIXED-SITE MARKETS

LEAP Markets, the flagship of our food access and farmer support programming, continued to improve and grow in 2017 (see "Comparative Gross Sales..." chart in 2017 By The Numbers, pg. 2). The Grandin Village and West End Farmers Markets consistently support new farms and food businesses and anchor their respective neighborhoods, where neighbors meet and people build community. New in 2017, LEAP used our existing Mobile Market infrastructure to run a produce table at the West End Farmers Market in order to round out market offerings and sell products that shoppers wanted but other vendors weren't selling.

30+
Vendors



21,000

Customers at Grandin
Village & West End (est.)

\$262K+

In Gross Vendor Sales

"Markets are really well-run, organized, advertised, very professional and friendly staff. All vendors seem cooperative and supportive which reflects well on whole market. Thanks for running such a positive market environment."

– Market vendor

Program report:

MOBILE MARKET

In 2017, LEAP purchased and retrofitted a new vehicle for the Mobile Market! A dedicated group of James Madison University Industrial Design students transformed our used box truck into a beautiful and efficient powerhouse produce sales vehicle, and we couldn't possibly be more proud of it. This vehicle (pictured), complete with a mural by a local artist, allowed us to visit more neighborhoods per week in less time, increase our weekly sales of local foods, and carry more product in temperature-controlled ways. Plus, it consistently starts and runs (which we couldn't say about the bus)! The vehicle and retrofit project happened in large part due to a successful Mobile Market fundraiser campaign held in winter 2017. We're grateful to all those who participated and supported the expansion of the LEAP Mobile Market!

10

Weekly stops

92%

of customers reported getting the majority of their produce from the Mobile Market

77%

of customers reported it was difficult for them to buy fresh produce outside the Mobile Market

"I like [the LEAP Mobile Market] because it's convenient. We don't have to go off the premises to get our vegetables, and everything is nice and fresh. I used to go to [the grocery store], I'd take the bus, but it was heavy... on the bus I can't carry a lot of stuff, so it was hard for me. I think it's really nice that you all come out and bring vegetables and help the residents here."

- Mobile Market customer



Program report:

LEAP KITCHEN

Roanoke's food business incubator and shared commercial kitchen entered its second year in 2017. Home to over 20 members, the LEAP Kitchen membership is as diverse and varied as Roanoke itself. Members include immigrant-owned businesses who took the initial steps to get unique products to market, well-established food ventures that found an affordable home at the LEAP Kitchen, and neighboring West End businesses who use the cold storage space and partner to hold special events.

The LEAP Kitchen allowed organizations like House of Bread, Happy Healthy Cooks, and Feeding America Southwest Virginia to increase their capacity and serve more clients. Roanoke Community Garden Association and Virginia Cooperative Extension regularly utilized the facility to offer cooking classes, preservation workshops, and hands on demonstrations to Roanokers from all walks of life.



"We absolutely fell in love with the place. Our overhead's gone down about 40% from being here. Other than that, it's just been really great to work with. The schedule works really great, staff has been really great, the equipment's been great, the kitchen's always clean after everybody uses it, which is nice. Other than that, we're just very, very happy."

- Marsha Fisher,
Bella Events Catering

20+
member businesses
& organizations

32+
classes & community
events hosted

86%
of members were
able to expand their
business because of
the Kitchen

Program report:

HEALTHY FOOD INCENTIVES

LEAP's Healthy Food Incentive (HFI) programs continue to grow and innovate. Finding and affording healthy produce comes with very real barriers for many members of our community, which is why LEAP expanded and piloted new programming to reach even more of Roanoke's food-insecure.

In 2017, LEAP launched a new program, the Medicaid Incentive Pilot. Similar to the well-established SNAP Double Value program, market shoppers who are Medicaid members visited LEAP markets and doubled the dollars they spent for even more fresh fruits and vegetables. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) funding and enrollment continues to drop in Roanoke and across Virginia, yet the need persists. Offering incentives to Medicaid members opened Healthy Food Incentives to an additional 10,000 Roanoke residents.



As in previous years, LEAP HFI programs continue to offer affordable access to local foods where people are comfortable and already congregating. In partnership with United Way and Healthy Roanoke Valley, the LEAP Mobile Market served three clinic sites with the Fresh Foods Rx program, where we filled “prescriptions” for fresh fruits and vegetables for low-income diabetes patients. The Mobile Market also had regular stops at Head Start centers and low-income senior housing sites, where specific incentives made fresh produce an affordable and regular part of these community members' diets.

2,500+

HFI transactions

\$35K

in Healthy Food Incentives redeemed

82%

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

When you're on a limited income, [the Senior Incentive Program] helps a lot.”
- HFI recipient

Program report:

REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING

In 2017, LEAP worked with partners and stakeholders to create a stronger food system in Roanoke, our Blue Ridge region, and across Virginia. Starting in February, LEAP held a series of Farmer Listening Sessions where we heard from farmers and stakeholders about the most pressing concerns for people growing and producing food for the local market. The Listening Sessions helped us keep the farmer voice at the center of all the work that we do and guided LEAP's strategic planning process for 2018 and beyond. Since the Listening Sessions, LEAP has worked with Virginia Cooperative Extension and Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission to create and manage Action Teams, which work on farmer-identified issues like consumer education, food distribution infrastructure needs, and more. These Action Teams are made up of regional farmers and stakeholders who are committed to helping grow our local food systems.

Additionally, LEAP continued work as a regional and a state co-lead of Virginia Fresh Match (VFM), a statewide network of farmers markets that offer nutrition incentive programs (like our SNAP Double Value). In the Blue Ridge region, LEAP has worked closely with eight other great area markets on regional marketing and joint funding. As a network, VFM does collective marketing, grows farmers market sales, and helps people bring home more healthy fruits and vegetables. Thanks to regional and statewide collaborative work, SNAP and Virginia Fresh Match incentive sales across the state have grown significantly over the past three years. LEAP is committed to working regionally and statewide to continue to strengthen the Virginia Fresh Match network, pilot new and innovative market-based incentives, and ensure that healthy local food is accessible and affordable for all.

\$171K+

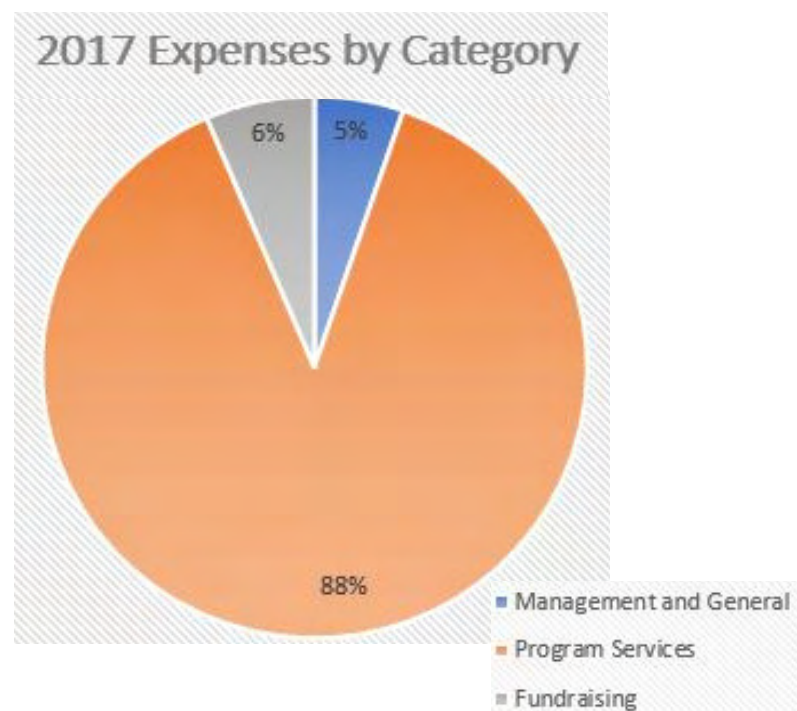
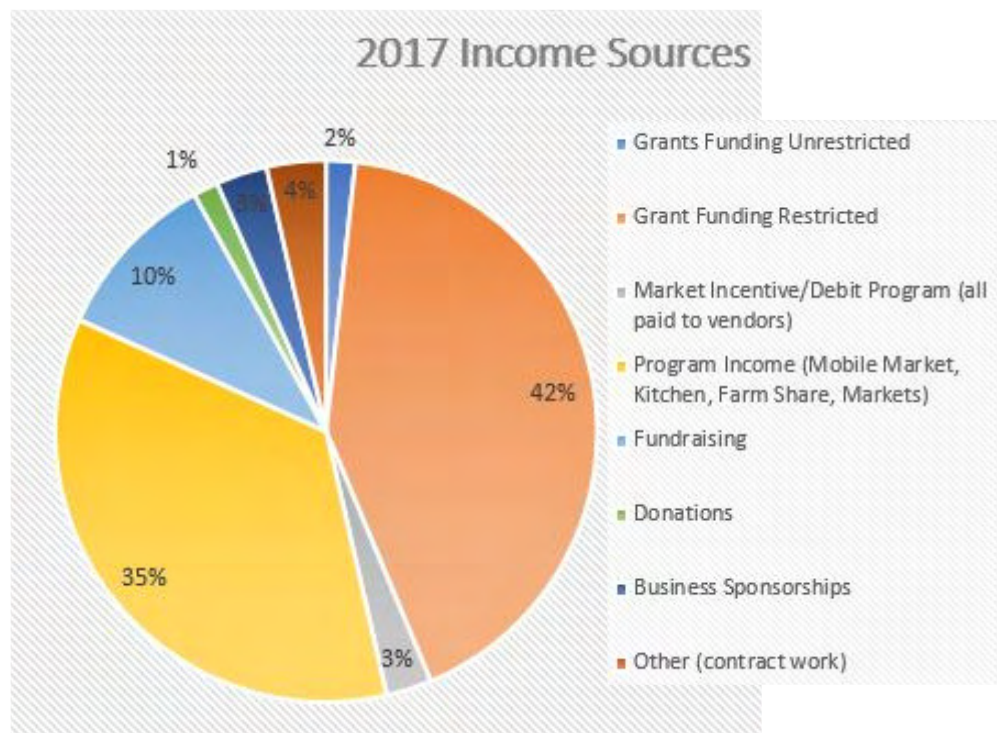
in Healthy Food Incentives
redeemed statewide



2017 ORGANIZATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORT

As LEAP has grown in staff and in programs, we continue to strive for financial sustainability. In 2014, LEAP's income was largely from grants (84%). Grant funding is still important to the finances of LEAP, but we do not want to be overly dependent on any single funding stream. In 2017, we made significant progress to follow a diverse funding model that includes program generated income including market incentives (38%), grant-based income (44%), and fundraising, donations, sponsorships, contract work (18%).

On the expense side, LEAP continues to prioritize our programs (88%) and we work hard to keep overhead low (11%). Strong financial management of LEAP allows us to plan for the future and work to address current and future needs in our neighborhood, city, and region. Thank you for your contributions of time, talent and treasure.



2017 BOARD & STAFF

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Diane Elliot

Maureen Best
Executive Director

Kelly McKeown Key
Farm Share Coordinator

Sam Lev
Program Coordinator

Tim Saunders
AmeriCorps
(through September 2017)

Ned Savage
AmeriCorps VISTA/
Community Outreach Specialist

Connie Kenny Smith
Market Manager

Alex Stewart
Mobile Market Manager
(through November 2017)

Mission:

To nurture healthy
communities and resilient
local food systems.

Contact:

info@LEAPforLocalFood.org
540-632-1360
www.LEAPforLocalFood.org