

Helping Food Businesses Go Local Evaluation Summary

This training for food service professionals was developed by CISA and the Franklin County Community Development Corporation (CDC). It was held at the CDC in Greenfield, MA on September 20, 2012. The training was followed by lunch and additional time for networking and optional tours of the Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center, a shared-use incubator kitchen run by the CDC, and Real Pickles, a small, independent business producing naturally-fermented pickled products using ingredients sourced from family farms in the Northeast. Evaluations were completed before the lunch and tours.

There were 22 participants in the training and 18 evaluations were completed. Responses to questions with a 4-part response scale (“not at all” to “greatly”) were coded on a 1 to 4 scale, with “not at all” equal to 1 and “greatly” equal to 4.

Part 1. The Current Climate. How much did this section:		Greatly	Moderately	A Little	Not at All
Avg. Response 3.76	Communicate the range of businesses growing and sourcing local food in the Pioneer Valley?	○	○	○	○
3.71	Communicate the assets of the Pioneer Valley food system?	○	○	○	○
3.53	Communicate the characteristics of consumer demand in the Pioneer Valley?	○	○	○	○

Comments: “While each item was checked “moderate” the whole is worth more than the items alone”, “Some data on consumer demand would be helpful”

Part 2. Entrepreneur Panel. How useful were the examples offered by:		Greatly	Moderately	A Little	Not at All
Avg. Response 3.75	GoBerry	○	○	○	○
3.75	Hedgie’s Hot Stuff	○	○	○	○
3.81	Hope & Olive	○	○	○	○

Sample Comments: “each valuable; GoBerry=relationships; Hedgie's=scale/growth decisions; H&O=processes/flexibility”, “All 3 were excellent and the stories helpful to hear. Would have been nice if they were part of the breakout”

Part 3. Lessons From Service Providers. How much did this section:		Greatly	Moderately	A Little	Not at All
Avg. Response 3.63	Provide useful information about the work of CISA?	○	○	○	○
3.63	Provide useful information about the work of the Franklin County CDC?	○	○	○	○
3.63	Provide useful information about the work of the Western MA Food Processing Center?	○	○	○	○

Comments: “Will be contacting organization for future partnership/more information if possible.” Two participants commented that they were already familiar with the work of these organizations.

Part 3 (continued). Discussion & Written Exercise. How much did this section:		Greatly	Moderately	A Little	Not at All
Avg. Response 3.03	Allow you to share your own expertise?	○	○	○	○
3.00	Help you identify areas where you could provide better service to your food business clients?	○	○	○	○
3.00	Help you identify resources or strategies for improving your services?	○	○	○	○
3.39	Help the group identify issues that we all have in common?	○	○	○	○

Comments: “Needs to be ongoing. Good beginning, continue to build relations like presenter talked about”, “Ask each participant to pose a specific need or resource, [this] would have helped breakout groups have more effective/impactful focus; very specific details most helpful.”

Overall, how much did the meeting:		Greatly	Moderately	A Little	Not at All
Avg. Response 3.24	Increase your awareness about the economic benefits and challenges that use of locally-grown food can offer food businesses and their communities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.44	Improve your connections to other Service Providers who are interested in and knowledgeable about this topic?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.23	Increase your ability to make referrals to Service Providers who are knowledgeable about this topic?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.07	Allow you to communicate what resources you need in order to better address this topic?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments: "More time to network with attendees", "Excellent meeting! Wonderful presenters"

Amount of time allotted: (1= far too little, 3= just right, 5=far too much)		Far too much time	Too much time	Enough Time	Too little time	Far too little time
Avg. Response 3.00	Introductions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.93	Part 1. Overview	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.88	Part 2. Entrepreneur Panel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Part 3. Lessons From Service Providers					
3.00	CISA Presentation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.88	CDC Presentation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.63	Discussion & Written Exercise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.83	Closing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What is one thing you would change about "Helping Food Businesses Go Local"?

Several respondents suggested including farmer perspectives and information about farmer use of the Food Processing Center. Others urged us to provide additional opportunities for service providers to learn from each other and from business presenters, and some asked for longer workshops.

Please identify one new idea or resource or approach that you might use with a client as a result of this workshop?

"Inquire about their local purchases", "Joint planning between producer & buyer, 2-way communication throughout the season (not just about logistics of planned delivery/supply, but about opportunities/barriers & how to respond)", "Bring CISA- FCCDC into [our workforce training program] at info sessions to job seekers", Discuss optimal scale; Discuss business relationships (which work, which don't, how to improve), Value of networking.

Additional comments:

"Today's gathering was well-conceived, well-publicized (via PVGrows' helpful email outreach) and wonderfully well-executed. This was a dynamic, inspiring, and valuable use of my time. Thank you! My hope is to be able to one day attract more (more, more) revenue to you."

"Benefitted greatly to see/hear that others are working with similar issues."

"It is very helpful to validate what we're doing with other people in the food system, and get suggestions on other things we could be doing."

"This was an excellent opportunity to get different people together to meet and hear range of capabilities and to put faces to names."

"The workshop increased my awareness of the impact & obstacles of using locally grown food, and made me more aware of potential synergies & efficiencies which could expand the market, future costs & expand the local economy."

"This workshop gave me a different point of view that I will be acquiring to help empower my clients to be more successful without compromising their vision."