Upper Valley Farmers’ Market Collaboration
Memorandum of Understanding

With funding from the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program grant “Increasing Farm Vendor Income through an Upper Valley Farmers Market Collaboration” (Sept 2017-Sept 2020), Vital Communities is working with farmers markets in our region to coordinate marketing, customer activities, assessment, and collaboration to increase the success and stability of all markets. This 3 year project requires consistent communication and engagement to gain the full value of this collaboration. By signing this Memorandum of Understanding, Vital Communities and the participating farmers’ market indicate a mutual understanding of the roles and expectations of each party during the duration of the project, as well as their commitment to the project. Two parties from each market (a manager and a member of the governance group) should sign this document, and return the signed copy by December 22, 2017 to Nancy LaRowe, Vital Communities, 195 North Main Street, White River Junction, VT, 05001.

Project Objectives:

- Increase farm vendor income at markets and increased customer base by improving market operations and outreach, pooling resources, collaborating to leverage economies of scale, and jointly implementing activities and assessments.
- Formation of a Steering Committee of market representatives responsible for developing a work plan, determine annual joint projects, advise Vital Communities on activities, and help with evaluation.
- Develop and complete market improvement activities prioritized by Collaboration intended to increase consumption of locally grown farm products, market visitation, and farm vendor income.
- Create a sustainability plan for successful elements of Collaboration.

Expectations and Responsibilities of Vital Communities

1. Provide backbone support for this collaboration including facilitating Steering Committee meetings, coordinating market manager mentor program, facilitating market assessments, performing project evaluation
2. Organize and coordinate annual Roundtable as an opportunity for markets to share information and network
3. Development and execution of market improvement activities (based on UVFMC input) which could include a roving cooking demo, market passport, or other coordinated marketing project
4. Provide technical assistance for markets as determined and needed
5. Design and print shared promotional materials for Collaborative as determined by Steering Committee
6. Facilitate market assessments and create evaluation tools to track success
7. Coordinate market mentorship program
8. Provide $4500 (USDA funding) annually for joint Collaborative marketing

Contact: Nancy LaRowe,
Nancy@VitalCommunities.org
Expectations and Responsibilities of Farmers’ Market partner

1. Send at least two representatives to the annual Roundtable (vendor, manager, board member) and to promote Roundtable to market community.
2. Maintain consistent communication with Collaboration (mostly during off season, but during market season if participating in a project) for entire grant period.
3. Markets will set self-determined goals for market sales, visitation numbers, vendor retention, and market operation, stability, and capacity and adhere to tracking and survey systems for evaluating success at meeting goals.
4. Participate in project evaluation, including providing baseline market data at beginning of Collaborative and annual required information.
5. Market will have at least one agricultural product vendor committed to sharing weekly sales information (anonymously) each market season 2018-2020 and will facilitate and encourage collection of annual sales figures (data kept anonymous and confidential) from all farm product vendors at your market.
6. Have representation on the Steering Committee for at least two years ($150 stipend/year provided).
7. Participate in at least two capacity building projects between January 2018 and September 2020.
8. Perform at least 2 market assessments during grant period.
9. Communicate Collaborative resources and activities to vendors regularly.
10. Actively participate in the Collaborative with positive attitude and willingness to learn, share, and support this work with the goal of strengthening ALL markets.

For _______________________________ Farmers’ Market on this day_______________, I agree to participate in the Upper Valley Farmers Market Collaborative under the above agreement.

Name:       Signature:

Role in Market:

For _______________________________ Farmers' Market on this day_______________, I agree to participate in the Upper Valley Farmers Market Collaborative under the above agreement.

Name:        Signature:

Role in Market:

For Vital Communities on this date ______________________________, I agree to participate in the Upper Valley Farmers Market Collaborative under the above agreement.

Name, Title:     Signature