

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Building Latino Farmers</b>		
<b>Sponsoring Agency</b>	NIFA	<b>Project Status</b>	COMPLETE
<b>Funding Source</b>	Non Formula	<b>Reporting Frequency</b>	Annual
<b>Accession No.</b>	225831	<b>Grants.gov No.</b>	
<b>Project No.</b>	WNW-2011-01030	<b>Proposal No.</b>	2011-01030
<b>Project Start Date</b>	09/01/2011	<b>Project End Date</b>	08/31/2014
<b>Reporting Period Start Date</b>	09/01/2011	<b>Reporting Period End Date</b>	08/31/2014
<b>Submitted By</b>	Sean Hopps	<b>Date Submitted to NIFA</b>	01/17/2015

**Program Code:** BFRDP

**Program Name:** Beginning Farmer and Rancher

**Project Director**

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**Recipient Organization**

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**Performing Department**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Co-Project Directors**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Departments**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Non-Technical Summary**

The Institute for Washington's Future has worked for the past eight years to find real solutions to economic development problems that confront beginning farmers and ranchers and other local entrepreneurs in rural communities throughout Washington State. For rural Washington's rapidly growing Latino population, now comprised of 2nd and 3rd generation descendents of immigrant farm workers, farm ownership offers an obvious path out of poverty, cultural isolation, and discrimination. Since 2007, the Institute has worked with Heritage University, several small towns and community based groups in Washington's Yakima Valley to create an innovative economic development model that works for Latino farmers and ranchers. The model has been implemented in an area centered around the town of Tieton and has three key elements: an ongoing peer support network, culturally appropriate training and technical services, and farm and business incubation facilities that anchor both network and services. This project will solidify and enrich the program now underway by building its training and technical assistance program, expanding the support network, and implementing it in other rural communities in Washington State.

**Accomplishments**

**Major goals of the project**

The goal of this project is creating a statewide Latino farm/ranch support network capable of delivering both direct assistance and perpetuating formation of grower-driven cooperatives, business partnerships, peer consulting, and other innovative initiatives achieving greater self sufficiency through collaboration. The ideal outcome is not merely that Latinos become better farmers, but that they participate in mutual support systems that anchor small farming enterprises against the economic turbulence plaguing our economy today. We will achieve these objectives and specific outcomes: 1. Develop within the training curriculum a full program targeted to the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers Create a series of informal meetings covering key issues such as understanding globalization. Implement the curriculum by conducting a complete series of 10 training meetings. Recruit at least twenty farmer/ranchers (or prospective farmers) to participate in seminar series the first year and sixty to seventy by the third year 2. Integrating the training program with a Farm Incubation Center. Complete The Farm Incubation Center in the first year. Recruit at least twenty participants in the farm incubation program and go through whole farm planning, including a T&TA element Identify, in the second year, at least two additional communities capable of in developing a farm incubation program Initiate, in the third year, planning for two new farm incubation centers 3. Implement a technical assistance referral system connecting participant farmers and ranchers to academic, governmental, and community based providers of assistance. Develop model land leasing contracts for program. Provide training in basic legal issues such as environmental compliance provided by in its trainings. Provide technical assistance to at least fifty farmer/ranchers (or prospective farmers) in the first year rising to a hundred by the third year 4. Conduct planning sessions with individual farmers

and ranchers leading to farm/ranch development plans. Develop a protocol for planning sessions, beginning with goal setting, and proceeding through feasibility analysis, marketing analysis and needs assessment. Develop with 20 farmer/ranchers a farm plan including an element laying out T&TA needs in the first year, rising to fifty by year three 5 Develop a peer to peer mentoring program for participating farmers and ranchers Organize and provide ongoing support through a network of peers support in cooperative development and joint projects as well as basic planning and evaluation services Work with at least twenty farmer/ranchers to access federal grants, loans and other support, providing T&TA in grant writing, business planning, farm operations and financial/legal issues, climbing to fifty by the third year. Develop a mentoring program for sustainable, organic agriculture involving at least twenty farmers in the third year 6. Expand the farmer/rancher to other areas as well as in Yakima County Organize as a in the first year Develop satellite trainings in two locations in the Yakima Valley in the second year Organize a full program in another agricultural area in the third year.

### What was accomplished under these goals?

It is informative to look back at the goals from the outset of this project and through its achievements it has yielded much learning - the overarching goal of network building was realized through very innovative and grassroots organizing approaches and methods. The goals listed numerically above shifted and morphed in very interesting ways in the three project years such that this report itself can serve as a tool for future innovation in building community assets that will support small, sustainable farming as a viable business opportunity in general, and for Latinos in particular. This is not a surprise, in part, the overarching goal was inspired by the Wallace Foundation's HUFED Innovations report from 2008, which described the importance of network building along with the time, ambiguity of process, and evaluation of that work.

The most important accomplishment of this project was the **organizing of a Latino led entity, the Washington Latino Farmers Network (WLFN)**, because it is model for a necessary component of the "network" and a vehicle for accomplishments in all six goal areas listed above (see Innovations Report, area 3, pg. 11): The WLFN was an important tool for outreach and needs assessment of beginning Latino farmers (1, 5). The organization was critical to program design and implementation, including hosting meetings and the seminar series and program integration (1, 2). The WLFN provided a platform to formalize a peer to peer mentorship program that provided outreach, information and referral, and farm planning. Also, to organize joint projects and seek funding and/or financing and to share resources, like equipment, etc. (1,3,4,5). The entity can expand its scope and capacity and/or provide models for community asset building on behalf of Latino farmers in other areas (6)

The second general accomplishment of "Developing Latino Farmers" was to expand and integrate the network of partners that we were working with. The Office of Farmworker Housing and Rural Development and their ADENTRO farm business and lending program was the most significant of these. Also, relationships and collaborations were developed with several food businesses and direct marketing channels in the urban market of Seattle. The program was able to integrate key components into a farm to table distribution chain that has the capacity to incubate start-up Latino food and farm businesses. The production end of the chain is hosted by the WLFN and is supported by ADENTRO and the emerging farm business training and research center at Heritage University. The market end is hosted by the IWF and supported by market research and customer development services of several consultants and partners. The IWF provides the WLFN technical assistance and organizes and coordinates up and down the chain.

What was accomplished under each goal:

- (1) A series of 10+ meetings were held each project year. About 75 different farmers attended one or more of the meetings. Meetings were supported and hosted by peer mentors and topics included farm planning, direct marketing initiative, financing, and basic risk management.
- (2) First, the farm to table distribution chain mentioned above was fully integrated and operational as an incubation program for start up Latino farm enterprises for the third project year. It had 12 participants from the target audience. It is an innovative design that engages start-ups on the main questions that they initially ask; "What do I grow?" and "Where do I sell it?" and then leads them through the farm planning process. The farm training center at Heritage partnered with the Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing (ORFH) to provide a bilingual and culturally designed farm business training module to prepare loan applications through ORFH: ADENTRO and Heritage had two modules, 15 Latino farmers enrolled. Eight graduated and three applied for loans underwritten by ORFH.
- (3) The WLFN became became the main vehicle for information and referral to resources developed by the project partners and general community resources.
- (4) By the end of year two a protocol was for annual outreach to beginning Latino farmers through the WLFN mentorship program that would lead them through the farm planning process for that growing season and connect participants the integrated resources of farm to table distribution change. 75 farmers received 600 hours of professional mentorship services from the WLFN, documented by IWF.
- (5) The WLFN received a budget for professional outreach and education services in the last two years of the BFRDP and was a subawardee on a 2014 LFPP grant received by the IWF and a grant received from NALCAB/Sam's club that provides them \$20,000 for equipment for value added production for their members. The WLFN received a 2014 VAPG for the planning of a community Value Added Production Center. In all cases the IWF provided technical assistance.
- (6) The development of the WLFN provides a template for organizing and community asset building of Latino farmers in other areas. The WLFN did provide some outreach in other counties - one of the board members lives in Skagit and contacts were

made in Benton, Walla Walla, and Whatcom counties. The work of applying the successful templates and models of "Developing Latino Farmers" largely remains to be done. A possible model is to write By - Laws for the WLFN that provide for a chapter template of governance.

At the conclusion of the project period in August of 2014, the focus of work was expanding the scope and capacity of the WLFN to serve small, sustainable Latino farmers and to build community assets in this pursuit. The project had built a strong network of partners and collaborators in support of the WLFN in particular, and small farmers in general. This network is currently engaged in a coordinated effort to create a farm to table distribution chain. The production end of the chain is governed by the WLFN and supported by IWF, Heritage University, ORFH, and other partners and is working to create a shared value-added production center supported by an array of services. The market end of the chain (Seattle and the urban markets West of the Cascades) is governed by the IWF and supported by Columbia Sustainable Enterprises and an array of direct to market, food sourcing businesses and consultants. Work on this end of the chain is toward a site based food hub and is directly coordinated with work on the production end. Our three year project Developing Latino Farmers has laid the basic foundation and discovered and connected the network for innovation in all four areas mentioned in the HUFED Innovations report, including the organization of incipient resources and leadership within the target audience. IWF and the WLFN are ready to build a value chain for small sustainable farmers in the short term and community wealth in all seven forms in the long term. Our success will, in part depend on our ability to continue to fund and sustain the IWF as a community development organization and to build the scope and capacity of the WLFN.

**What opportunities for training and professional development has the project provided?**

The following opportunities for professional development and training were provided:

**IWF consultant, Maru Villalpando, and PD, Representative Luis Moscoso**, facilitated leadership and political advocacy training

in individual mentorship sessions and at meetings/workshops.

**The Washington Latino Farmers Network** provided mentorship services on farm planning, best practices, and other technical issues in

individual sessions and at meetings/workshops.

**Heritage Students and IWF staff, Bevin McLeod, Juan Diego Aguilar and Sean Hopps**, provided individual training and mentorship in use of

technology for marketing promotion and business administration.

All professional development and training was delivered bilingually.

**Heritage and ORFH provided ADENTRO** farm business program; the opportunity for participants to complete a farm business training module and then receive technical assistance applying for a loan to be underwritten by ORFH.

**How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?**

Results have been disseminated to communities of interest through direct and indirect outreach. Direct outreach methods include:

Personal visits

Meetings and workshops

Peer to peer mentorship

Indirect include:

Word of mouth

flyers and brochures

Radio announcements on KDNA

The IWF and Heritage hosted the conference, A Community Conversation on Leadership, in November of 2013, the WLFN hosted the farming track and results were shared with attendees which included representatives from the USDA - FSA and RMA, the Yakima farmworkers clinic, the Heritage Science and Business department, Yakima Valley College, ORFH, members of the target audience, and several other community stakeholders.

Sean Hopps also participated in Start2Farm forums and published three stories on the website.

**What do you plan to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals?**

{Nothing to report}

**Participants**

**Actual FTE's for this Reporting Period**

Role	Non-Students or faculty	Students with Staffing Roles			Computed Total by Role
		Undergraduate	Graduate	Post-Doctorate	

**Actual FTE's for this Reporting Period**

Role	Non-Students or faculty	Students with Staffing Roles			Computed Total by Role
		Undergraduate	Graduate	Post-Doctorate	
Scientist	0.3	0	0	0	0.3
Professional	3	0	0	0	3
Technical	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative	1	0	0	0	1
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Computed Total	4.3	0	0	0	4.3

**Student Count by Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Target Audience**

The project made direct contact with well over 150 start-up Latino farm enterprises and aspiring Latino farmers in its outreach and engagement efforts. The project also made contact with direct contact with over 20 established Latino farmers in efforts to find leaders who would assist with the development of our program from general outreach and engagement efforts all the way to program design and to the ultimate goal of establishing a Latino farmer led organization as a crucial element of the network for support of beginning Latino farmers that this project endeavored to build.

**Products**

{Nothing to report}

**Other Products****Product Type**

Models

**Description**

The Washington Latino Farmers Network (WLFN) an association of independent producers and start-up farm enterprises that provides a formal platform for self-help, education and training, collaboration. Among other advantages, it provides a much more fluid and flexible model for marketing collaboration and community and individual asset building than Co-ops.

**Product Type**

Educational Aids or Curricula

**Description**

Series of four peer mentorship workshops each project year for farm business planning and execution, from pre - season to harvest. 75 total participants from target audience.

**Product Type**

Models

**Description**

"Farm to Table Distribution Chain" direct marketing initiative. Anchored at the production end by the WLFN and integrated services - Heritage University Farm Business Program, ADENTRO financing, and information and referral services. Anchored at the market end by marketing consultants and direct to market food sourcing business collaborators - Columbia Sustainable Enterprises, Sourcerer, Real Food Buying Club, others. Benefited 12 Latino owned start-ups in second and third project year.

**Product Type**

Other

**Description**

three farm to table events in year two and three through technical assistance of IWF and Heritage University. Directly Benefited 24 members of target audience.

**Product Type**

Data and Research Material

**Description**

Contracted with a Tourism Consultant (Heidi Siegelbaum) to perform major study on the agri-tourism potential for small farmers in the Yakima Valley. Now being considered by several farmers and a Direct Marketing Company

**Product Type**

Educational Aids or Curricula

**Description**

Supported Heritage University in developing an advanced farm business training program targeted to beginning farmers and ranchers, with an emphasis on Latinos and Native Americans

**Product Type**

Models

**Description**

Worked with the City of Tieton to develop a model Farm on City Property to support developing farmers and ranchers

**Product Type**

Data and Research Material

**Description**

Initiated, along with Heritage University, a project researching the use of biochar as an organic soil amendment and a remedial agent for pollution from farm run-off

**Product Type**

Educational Aids or Curricula

**Description**

Initiated planning with Heritage University and the WLFN for a farm incubation program to supplement the established farm business program

**Changes/Problems****Change in PD: In February of 2013 IWF Director, Luis Moscoso became the PD for the project, replacing Donald Hopps.**

IWF attempted to report this change at the time, but was informed in October that we had not submitted the correct paperwork to NIFA. We have submitted the requested paperwork and Luis attended the November BFRDP conference as PD.

**Washington Latino Farmers Network (WLFN):** In our first progress report we discussed project partner CPOVA, a Latino farming

cooperative that was to provide outreach and education and technical assistance to the project. We reported that CPOVA had focused on their own farming business and had not been effective in this project role, as an organization (Though some individual members did provide these services and continue to do so as part of a broader group of established producers).

During this reporting period, IWF successfully engaged and organized a broader group of established Latino producers. We refer to this group as the Washington Latino Farmers Network (WLFN) and it replaces CPOVA as the project partner

