Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative Cross-Site Evaluation Summary of Outcomes and Impacts, 2013-14 (Year 5)

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Six rural counties in Northeast Iowa (Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek), the approximate geographic size of Connecticut with a population of 100,000, are working together to improve the health and well-being of children and their families in the region. The Initiative focuses efforts on four strategic areas: K-12 schools, early childcare, local food systems development, and active living/transportation. What follows is a summary of outcomes and impacts brought by this collaboration and implications for children and families in the region.

Impact on Equity

FFI's mission is to increase access to healthy, locally grown foods and abundant opportunities for physical activity and play for children, especially those who are most vulnerable. Year 5 impacts on equity include:

- The **Farm to Preschool program expanded its reach greatly in Year 5**. It was implemented at all 15 Head Start classrooms in Northeast Iowa as well as 21 preschool classrooms, reaching **approximately 667 three- and four-year-old students.** All Head Start students are at or below the poverty line or have a disability as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- **FFI reached 82.3% (1,126) of non-white pre K-12 students** in Northeast Iowa through its work in schools.

Job Creation and Other Economic Opportunities

The Initiative has tracked job creation, retention, and expansion related to food and fitness work for five years. Table 1 shows the cumulative results during that time. Listed is the number of jobs and **full time equivalent** (FTE) jobs created at the farm level and/or value-added jobs, as well as those created within partnering institutions and for the Initiative. We also tracked other kinds of economic opportunities that do not qualify as FTE jobs, but reflect positive economic change in the region.

Table 1: New or expanded economic development opportunities associated with NEI FFI, 2009-14

Economic Opportunity	Year 1 (2009)	Year 2 (2010)	Year 3 (2011)	Year 4 (2012)	Year 5 (2013)	Total FTE Jobs	Total Jobs
New Job Creation							
Number of new farm-level and value-added jobs[1]	2	17	8	10	12	NA	49
Estimated number of new FTE[2] farm-level and value-added jobs	2	11.5	6	6	7.5	33	NA
Number of new institutional/intermediated market buyer jobs[3]	0	0	4	3	6	NA	13
Number of estimated new FTE[2]institutional market buyer jobs	0	0	3	2.5	3	8.5	NA
FFI Jobs	6	5	0	1	0	NA	12
FFI Jobs (FTE)[4]	2.5	2.5	0	0.7	0	5.7	NA
New AmeriCorps and Food Corps service positions[5]	2	2	1	1	0	6	6
TOTAL new job creation (does not include	**6.5**	**21.5**	**13**	**14.7**	**18**	NA	**80**

jobs lost)							
TOTAL new FTE[2] job creation	**6.5**	**16**	**10**	**10.2**	**10.5**	**53.2**	NA
Number of new local food producers/food enterprises[6]	8	12	14	14	15	NA	63
Number of expanded jobs[7]	0	0.5	2.5	6	3	NA	12
TOTAL NUMBER of new or expanded economic opportunities[8]	14.5	28.5	26.5	30.2	28.5	NA	189

[1]This category includes position-related jobs as well as jobs associated with on- or off-farm processing, distribution and marketing.
[2]FTE jobs were calculated whereby 1 permanent FT job=1, while 1 permanent PT, seasonal FT, or seasonal PT job=.5.
[3]This category of jobs includes those created within institutions and intermediated markets buying locally grown food (including local foods buyers/purchasing specialists, food prep jobs, and nutrition outreach coordination).
[4]FFI jobs were created using WKKF dollars and leveraged dollars to pay for staff to support FFI efforts.
[5]FFI writes a new application to employ service members each year. The number awarded varies from year to year. Figures in the table represent the number of NEW service member positions awarded FFI each year.
[6]Numbers in this category are not included in the category on New Job Creation because they may or may not be full-time jobs. Most new local food producers also have off-farm jobs or may be adding local food production to an existing farm. A whole new job is not necessarily created but the new local food enterprise does offer new economic opportunities.
[7] These are jobs that already existed but were expanded to include additional paid time spent on local foods or FFI work.
[8]Total number of new or expanded economic opportunities was calculated by adding Total new job creation, Number of new local food producers/ food enterprises, and Number of expanded jobs.

Food System Change in Northeast Iowa

Besides job growth, the Initiative tracks change in local foods commerce.

- **Tracked food sales by farmers increased by more than a million dollars** from Year 4 to Year 5. Sales of local food in Year 5 were $8.6 million, up from $7.3 million in Year 4. Of the 19 farmers reporting in both years, 12 (63%) increased or maintained their level of local food sales compared to Year 4.
- **School purchases of local food were up by 67%** from $20,236 in Year 4 to $33,792 in Year 5. Of the 13 schools reporting in both years, 9 (69%) increased purchases of local food compared to Year 4.
- The **total value of local foods purchased by non-school markets was up by 20%**, from $1,160,978 (n=17) in Year 4 to $1,398,962 (n=9) in Year 5, despite the fact that the number of institutions reporting was only about half as many in Year 5 as Year 4. Of the six non-school respondents reporting in both years, half (3) increased local food purchases and half (3) decreased local food purchases.
- The Iowa Food Hub (IFH), a non-profit food hub that emerged out of the NIFF Coalition and the FFI, continues to work to supporting the aggregation and distribution of foods produced in Northeast Iowa, lessening the effects of poverty. Accomplishments in Year 5 include:
  - In September 2013 the IFH acquired a refrigerated truck using a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant to coordinate delivery of local foods.
  - The IFH hired a full-time food hub intern, who later transitioned into the full-time food hub coordinator.
  - By Summer, 2014, the IFH was grossing $30,000 in sales per month.
  - The Allamakee New Beginnings Board, the host organization of the IFH, added new goals to its mission directly related to creating markets for farmers and increasing access to local food for vulnerable populations. It also created a grower handbook and approved new personnel and fiscal policies.
  - The IFH was one of eight food hubs selected to participate in a pilot Group GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) program supported by the USDA and Wallace Center. The program allows food hubs and other organizations to cooperatively manage the implementation of GAP standards across all of their source farms at once, increasing the level of market-based internal support that producers receive, thereby ensuring the highest possible level of compliance while remaining scale-appropriate.
- FFI received a two-year Farm to School grant from the USDA. FFI will use the grant to build collaborations with farmers to scale up production through the IFH and work with four schools to expand their Farm to School programming and double their purchases of local foods.

- A new youth program was launched in Year 5 in conjunction with the Farm to School grant. Seven school districts were trained to do cafeteria coaching; three school districts chose to implement the program.
- In Year 5, a new Food Empowerment Education Sustainability Team (FEEST) internship program was implemented in Northeast Iowa. Youth interns from three schools coordinated six FEEST meals at their schools or in the community. A FEEST coordinator was also hired to oversee the interns and assist them in their work.
- Through collaboration with a local meat processor, the IFH, and the FFI's Farm to School program, local pork was made available to K-12 schools and Luther College throughout the spring of 2014. Ten hogs were processed per week and the IFH delivered the meat to schools and Luther College. The cost was kept affordable by using "seconds," hogs which have physical defects that do not affect meat quality.

Leveraged Funding

In Year 5, the Initiative leveraged nearly half a million dollars. Table 2 shows funding leveraged in the years the Initiative has received funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF). Over the past five years, 22% was leveraged from national/federal sources, 55% was leveraged from state sources, and 23% was leveraged from local sources within NE Iowa. The majority of total FFI related funding came from the public sector (73%), 10% came from the civic sector, 3% came from the private sector, and 14% came from the result of multi-sector collaboration. These analyses do not include WKKF funding.

Table 2: Leverage of the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative, 2008-2013

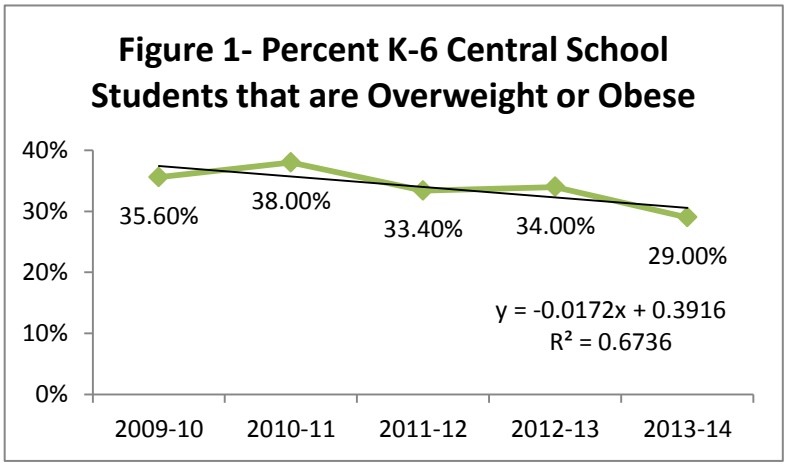
	WK Kellogg Foundation funding	Direct Leverage by NEIF&F	Aligned Leverage by NEIF&F	Total Leverage by NEIF&F	Total FFI Related Investment
Planning Phase (2008-2009)	$500,000	$0	$400,000	$400,000	$900,000
Year 1 Community Action Plan (2009-2010)	$400,000	$237,093.00	$656,059.00	$893,152.00	$1,293,152
Year 2 Community Action Plan (2010-2011)	$400,000	$278,201.81	$86,214.00	$364,415.81	$764,415.81
Year 3 Community Action Plan (2011-2012)	$400,000	$480,568.86	$228,503.03	$709,071.89	$1,109,071.89
Year 4 Community Action Plan (2012-2013)	$300,000	$497,523.66	$136,956.67	$634,480.33	$934,480.33
Year 5 Community Action Plan (2013-14)	$200,000	$472,006.57	$113,611.32	$585,617.89	$785,617.89
GRAND TOTALS	**$2,200,000**	**$1,965,393.90**	**$1,621,344.02**	**$3,586,737.92**	**$5,786,737.92**

Community partners are investing financially to sustain FFI:

- **Ten schools have agreed to contribute toward the stipend of an FFI Resource Contact (RC)**, an AmeriCorps or FoodCorps service member to work in their school in 2014-15. Six schools are contributing $5,000 each for a full-time RC, and three schools are contributing $2,500 for a part-time RC, who will alternatively work two or three days per week at the school. A fourth school is working to raise $2,500 for a part-time RC. **This is a total of $37,500 invested thus far by schools.**
- Over $5,000 was raised by FFI in one day on Great Give Day, a social media event that encourages community members to donate to local nonprofits. The funds will be used for FFI school outreach in 2014-15.

- Northeast Iowa Community College, a FFI Core Partner, began financially supporting FFI's early childhood regional outreach with $5,000 per year for three years, beginning in July of 2014.

School and Early Childhood Change

Schools and early child care settings are targets of change. In the past year,

- Ten schools committed to financially supporting an FFI Resource Contact in 2014-15, demonstrating their commitment to maintaining and growing food and fitness programming and education.
- FFI staff provided 388 hours of nutrition and food education to children in 2013-14.
- Nine schools have before or after school programming that includes a food, fitness, or gardening element. Sixty-three hours of after-school food and fitness programming were provided by FFI staff.
- 13 (93%) schools have at least one school garden, for a total of 19 school gardens.
- Farm to Preschool was implemented in all 15 Head Start classrooms in Northeast Iowa as well as in 21 voluntary preschools.
- The NICC Early Childhood Education Department trained all early childhood education students to use the Farm to Preschool curriculum. Students applied F2PS lessons to their field experiences.
- A survey of Head Start parents conducted in January, 2014 indicates that parents have seen positive outcomes of the Farm to Preschool program. **94 out of 125 respondents strongly agree their child is more likely to choose or try healthy foods since participating in F2PS activities and 75 respondents strongly agree their family has made healthier food or wellness choices since starting Head Start.**
- The F2PS program is embedding in Head Start. **Half of Head Start staff included F2PS in their goals for Year 6.**
- **FFI's Early Childhood program is reaching vulnerable families.** Resources created by FFI for use with parents about healthy eating and physical activity were translated into Spanish. In addition, grocery store tours were held for Head Start families in four communities in Year 5 to teach participants to eat healthy on a budget.
- **Youth engagement in the FFI continues to require a high level of investment.** Total enrollment in FFI Youth 4-H Teams was down slightly in Year 5 to 198 from 217 in Year 4. This is partially due to a reduction in the number of teams, to 14 in Year 5 from 17 in Year 4. For this reason, FFI will focus on deepening youth engagement in schools rather than striving to maintain broad engagement where there is low local commitment.
- **A total of 19 walking school buses operated in 9 communities in Year 5, up from 17 buses in Year 4.** The buses involved 50 adult volunteers, an estimated 35 of which are parents and 250 students.
- **Ten Bike Rodeos were held in Year 5, reaching 650 students.**
- **Safe Routes to Schools community coalitions have formed in five communities.** These groups of community stakeholders work with FFI's safe routes to school liaison to organize walking school buses and bike rodeos.
- **90 youth leaders participated in planning, advocating, and implementing active transportation activities in Year 5, up from 48 in Year 4.**
- **A total of 39 parent outreach events were held** with a FFI component in early childhood and K-12 school settings in Year 5, up from 26 in Year 4.
- **Central Community School District** has tracked the BMI of students in grades K-6 for five years. The data, shown in Figure 1, **shows a slight decline in the percentage of students that are overweight or obese** over that time period.