

# Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative Cross-Site Evaluation Summary of Outcomes and Impacts, 2014-15 (Year 6)

*Arlene Enderton and Corry Bregendahl, October 2015*

Contributors: Teresa Wiemerslage, Ann Mansfield, Haleisa Johnson, Emily Neal, Ashley Christensen, Laura Liechty, FFI Regional Leadership Council, FFI 2014-15 NE Iowa AmeriCorps and FoodCorps Service Members, and FFI Youth 4-H team members.

**#IamFFI** The Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative works in six rural counties in Northeast Iowa (Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek) to improve the health and well-being of children and families in the region. Countless individuals and organizations work together to increase access to healthy, local foods and opportunities for play, through four strategies—K-12 Schools, Early Childhood, Local Food, and Safe Routes to School—while engaging youth in all strategies. This report shares the highlights of FFI’s outcomes and impacts in 2015.

## *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 6 impacts on equity include:

- **FFI reached 88% (1,262) of non-white pre K-12 students** in Northeast Iowa through its work in schools.
- FFI’s Farm to Preschool program reached an estimated 950 preschool students. Three hundred thirty-seven of these were Head Start or Early Head Start students, all of whom are from low-income families.

## *Food System Change in Northeast Iowa*

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

- **School purchases more than doubled from \$33,792 in 2013-14 to \$72,020 in 2014-15.** The increase was due to the convenience of ordering local foods through the Iowa Food Hub and to the commitment of four schools involved in the Seasonal Cycle Menu project to double their purchases of local foods.
- Through FFI’s USDA Farm to School grant, schools were able to purchase local fruits and vegetables which were cut and/or frozen at a local commercial kitchen. They were able to purchase shredded cabbage, cubed squash, diced sweet potatoes and frozen strawberries.
- The **total value of local foods purchased by non-school markets was up by 23%**, from \$1,398,962 (n=9) in 2013 to \$1,716,797 (n=4) in 2014, despite the fact that the number of institutions reporting was only about half as many in 2014 as in 2013.
- **Local food sales reported by farmers increased over 30% from \$1.7 million in 2013 to \$2.2 million in 2014.**
- **25 jobs were created** by farms businesses and institutions as a result of producing, processing, or utilizing local foods in 2014. Ten of those jobs were full-time jobs.
- The Iowa Food Hub (IFH), a non-profit food hub that emerged out of the NIFF Coalition and the FFI, continues to aggregate and distribute foods produced in Northeast Iowa, lessening the effects of poverty.

Accomplishments in Year 6 include:

- In 2014, IFH purchased \$236,518 from local farmers, more than three times as much as in 2013 (\$74,419).
- By July 2015, 64 farmers or farmer groups were selling their products to the IFH.
- The Allamakee New Beginnings Board, the host organization of the IFH, created a new vendor policy, which outlines the requirements for vendors to sell to the IFH and lists additional and exceptional attributes which the IFH would like from their vendors in the areas of geographic location, production practices, and social/economic impact. This allows the IFH to evaluate how well it is meeting its goal to distribute food produced on small, local, sustainable farms.
- The IFH moved to its own space in 2014.

## Job Creation and Other Economic Opportunities

The Initiative has tracked job creation, retention, and expansion related to food and fitness work for six 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, 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.

<b>Table 1: New or Expanded Economic Development Opportunities Associated with NE Iowa Food &amp; Fitness, 2009-2014</b>								
<b>Economic Opportunity</b>	<b>Year 1 (2009)</b>	<b>Year 2 (2010)</b>	<b>Year 3 (2011)</b>	<b>Year 4 (2012)</b>	<b>Year 5 (2013)</b>	<b>Year 6 (2014)</b>	<b>Total FTE Jobs</b>	<b>Total Jobs</b>
<b>New Job Creation</b>								
Number of new farm-level and value-added jobs <sup>1</sup>	2	17	8	10	20 <sup>9</sup>	14	NA	71
Estimated number of new FTE <sup>2</sup> farm-level and value-added jobs	2	11.5	6	6	12	8.5	46	NA
Number of new institutional/intermediated market buyer jobs <sup>3</sup>	0	0	4	3	6	9	NA	22
Number of estimated new FTE <sup>2</sup> institutional market buyer jobs	0	0	3	2.5	3	7	15.5	NA
FFI Jobs	6	5	0	1	0	0	NA	12
FFI Jobs (FTE) <sup>4</sup>	2.5	2.5	0	0.7	0	0	5.7	NA
New AmeriCorps and FoodCorps service positions <sup>5</sup>	2	2	1	1	0	2	8	8
TOTAL new job creation (excludes jobs lost)	10	24	13	15	26	25	NA	113
TOTAL new FTE <sup>2</sup> job creation	6.5	16	10	10.2	15	17.5	75.2	NA
<b>Number of new local food producers/food enterprises<sup>6</sup></b>	8	12	14	14	15	3	NA	66
<b>Number of expanded jobs<sup>7</sup></b>	0	0.5	2.5	6	3	4	NA	16
<b>TOTAL NUMBER of new or expanded economic opportunities<sup>8</sup></b>	18	36.5	29.5	35	44	32	NA	195

<sup>1</sup>This category includes position-related jobs as well as jobs associated with on- or off-farm processing, distribution and marketing.

<sup>2</sup>FTE jobs were calculated whereby 1 permanent FT job=1, while 1 permanent PT, seasonal FT, or seasonal PT job=.5.

<sup>3</sup>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).

<sup>4</sup>FFI jobs were created using WKKF dollars and leveraged dollars to pay for staff to support FFI efforts.

<sup>5</sup>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.

<sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>These are jobs that already existed but were expanded to include additional paid time spent on local foods or FFI work.

<sup>8</sup>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.

<sup>9</sup>This number was updated from what was reported last year, because additional data was shared by farmers.

### Leveraged Funding

**In Year 6, the Initiative leveraged nearly half a million dollars in direct leverage.** For every dollar invested by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation since 2007, the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative has leveraged an additional \$1.71. Table 2 shows funding leveraged in the years the Initiative has received funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF). Over the past six years, 29% was leveraged from national/federal sources, 49% was leveraged from state sources, and 22% was leveraged from local sources within NE Iowa. The majority of total FFI related funding came from the public sector (72%), 12% came from the civic sector, 3% came from the private sector, and 13% 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**

	<b>WK Kellogg Foundation funding</b>	<b>Direct Leverage by NEIF&amp;F</b>	<b>Aligned Leverage by NEIF&amp;F</b>	<b>Total Leverage by NEIF&amp;F</b>	<b>Total FFI Related Investment</b>
<b>Planning Phase (2007-2009)</b>	\$650,000	\$0	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$900,000
<b>Year 1 Community Action Plan (2009-2010)</b>	\$400,000	\$237,093.00	\$656,059.00	\$893,152.00	\$1,293,152
<b>Year 2 Community Action Plan (2010-2011)</b>	\$400,000	\$278,201.81	\$86,214.00	\$364,415.81	\$764,415.81
<b>Year 3 Community Action Plan (2011-2012)</b>	\$400,000	\$480,568.86	\$228,503.03	\$709,071.89	\$1,109,071.89
<b>Year 4 Community Action Plan (2012-2013)</b>	\$300,000	\$497,523.66	\$136,956.67	\$634,480.33	\$934,480.33
<b>Year 5 Community Action Plan (2013-14)</b>	\$200,000	\$472,006.57	\$113,611.32	\$585,617.89	\$785,617.89
<b>Year 6 Community Action Plan (2014-15)</b>	\$200,000	\$452,396.99	\$325,402.75	\$777,799.74	\$977,800
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>\$2,550,000</b>	<b>\$2,417,791</b>	<b>\$1,946,747</b>	<b>\$4,364,538</b>	<b>\$6,914,538</b>

Community partners are investing financially to sustain FFI:

- Since 2009, over \$800,000 in local public, private, and civic funding have been invested in FFI and aligned efforts in Northeast Iowa that are also working to increase access to healthy local foods and opportunities for active living.
- Nine schools committed to financially supporting an FFI Resource Contact in 2015-16, with a total of \$45,000 invested. This demonstrates their commitment to FFI and the value they place on having a daily FFI presence in their schools.

### School and Early Childhood Change

Healthy living habits are best formed in childhood. Therefore, FFI works extensively with schools and early childhood providers to impact children. In the past year,

- **FFI's Farm to Preschool program expanded.** The Farm to Preschool (F2PS) program was implemented in a total of 46 classrooms or sites in 2014-15—15 Head Start classrooms, 19 school-based preschools, six

parochial preschools, and six private or community-based preschools—reaching an estimated 950 children. This is an increase of nine classrooms from 37 classrooms 2013-14.

- **Through monthly Farm to Preschool celebrations, 880 contacts were made with parents or other adults who are active in children’s lives.**
- A survey of Head Start parents conducted in January, 2015 indicated that parents have seen positive outcomes of the Farm to Preschool program. Three out of four (75%) Head Start parents strongly agreed that **their child is more likely to choose or try healthy foods** since participating in Farm to Preschool activities and two out of three respondents strongly agreed that **their family has made healthier food or wellness choices** since starting Head Start.
- **Head Start students engaged in 70 minutes of physical activity per day on average.** This is 10 minutes more than the 60 minutes required by the Head Start wellness policy.
- **A total of 82 parent outreach events were held** with a FFI component in early childhood and K-12 school settings in Year 6, up from 39 in Year 5.
- FFI School Outreach provided 572 hours of nutrition and food education to children.
- Six Northeast Iowa schools have achieved the bronze or above level in the Healthier US Schools Challenge: Smarter Lunchrooms Award. Four of them achieved it in year 6.
- Three Northeast Iowa schools updated their school wellness policies: St. Joseph Community School, Postville CSD and Central CSD.
- ISUEO reconfigured staff to maintain youth engagement, while increasing their capacity to offer community nutrition programming. In 2014-15, FFI’s Youth Engagement Coordinator visited every youth team site to better understand their needs and to assist in leveraging their capacity to brainstorm project ideas and implement new ideas to promote healthier school environments.
- Two hundred twelve youth participated in 14 youth teams in the region in year 6.
- **86% of FFI Youth 4-H Teams were rated as intermediate or high on the youth engagement score card in year 6, up from 37.5% in Year 5.**
- **Twenty-one Walking School Buses (WSBs) operated in 13 communities and involved 255 youth.** A total of 31 WSB routes have been developed in Northeast Iowa since they were introduced in the region in 2009.
- **Twelve Bike Rodeos were held, reaching 1200 students.** More students were reached in 2014-15 than in 2013-14 partially because many schools agreed to incorporate Bike Rodeos into the school day.
- **Safe Routes to Schools community coalitions worked in nine communities.** These groups of community stakeholders work with FFI’s Safe Routes to School Coordinator to organize Walking School Buses and Bike Rodeos.
- **84 youth leaders participated in planning, advocating, and implementing active transportation activities in Year 6, holding steady when compared with year 5 (90 youth).**
- **Central Community School District** tracked the percent of students overweight or obese in grades K-6 for six years. The data, shown in Figure 1, **continues to show a slight decline in the percentage of students that are overweight or obese** over that time period.
- In 2014-15 ten schools participated in a project to track student weight status in the region. **It revealed that 38 percent of participating K-6 students were overweight or obese in 2014-15, shown in the figure to the right.** This information is spurring continued reflection on how schools and the community can better support healthy living for their children.

