Overview of Program Evaluation Webinar Transcript

Kathryn Colasanti: Courtney is joining us from Omaha, Nebraska, and the rest of us are coming to you live from the Office of the [Inaudible] in Ypsilanti, Michigan, and we're showing control. So if we [inaudible], but thank you, everyone, for joining us today. My name's Kathryn Colasanti with the Center for Regional Food Systems at Michigan State University. Welcome to this webinar. [Inaudible] introduce the speakers in just a moment, but, first, I want to give a little bit of context for today's webinar. This is part of our Shared Measurement project, which is part of the larger framework of collected impact that we have been utilizing and thinking about good systems work in Michigan and how we all work together more strategically for stronger outcomes, and Shared Measurement is a way for us to align what data we're collecting, how we're collecting it in ways that will better measure progress towards the goals of the Michigan [inaudible] Charter and also allow us to hold ourselves accountable to, to our goals and to compare and aggregate data across organizations. And this training is in response to a need that was identified through the Shared Measurement interviews conducted by Courtney with the [inaudible] Center for Nutrition, the, the interviews with our stakeholders and partners. Many of you identified an interest and a desire for just greater understanding around data collection. So we are starting off with two trainings, this first one on evaluation and one coming up on research that will just provide a foundational understanding around data collection, and building on those next year we'll be developing more specific trainings around specific data collection tools in line with Share Measurement [Inaudible] areas. So stay tuned for more on those. And now I'd like to introduce today's speakers. First, [inaudible] have Courtney Pinard, who is a research scientist at the Graduate Swanson Center for Nutrition. She holds a special dean's appointment as assistant professor in department of health promotions, social, and behavioral health at the College of Public Health with the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She conducts research focusing on public health outcomes, of policies, programs, and practices that impact nutrition and diet, and her work has an overarching emphasis on measurement and evaluation, which has been a great asset to us in this, the Shared Measurement project. And Courtney has particular interest in [inaudible] food access and how regional food systems can strengthen community food security. Next we'll hear from Sue Ann Savas, who is a clinical assistant professor at University of Michigan School of Social Work and director of the Curtis Center program evaluation group. Sue Ann has her M.S.W., M.B.A. in economics from University of Michigan and for over twenty years has practiced as a program evaluator and training students in evaluation. She specializes in the areas of program design, [inaudible] modeling, evaluation planning, implementation evaluations, outcome measurement, and reporting for continuous quality improvement, and she's published numerous articles and book chapters on techniques for building evaluation capacity within organizations and coalitions. And she's also part of the evaluation team that we're working with on one of our current Kellogg Foundation grants. And our last speaker today is Amanda

Edmonds. Many of you likely know Amanda as founder and director since 2003 of Growing Hope, which is dedicated to helping people grow and access healthy food. Amanda is also an alumna of the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment. She served as a policy leader, both as a [inaudible] appointee to Michigan [Inaudible] Policy Council, as vice chair of [Inaudible] Council, and in November, 2014 was elected mayor [inaudible]. And Amanda travels nationally as a speaker and trainer in community organizing, organized, organizational development, and community food systems, and has also contributed her experience and expertise to the advisory committee for the Shared Measurement project. So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Courtney to talk a little bit more about the Shared Measurement Process.

Courtney Pinard: Hey, great. [Inaudible] thanks for signing up and being interested in this. You can hear me, right, Kathryn.

Kathryn Colasanti: Yes, I can.

Courtney Pinard: OK, great. I just wanted to check. So this slide here will be an overview for those of you who have been along with us for the Shared Measurement project. Just a refresher on what has been done and where we're going with all of this and how program evaluation really fits in with, within the Shared Measures framework. So as Kathryn mentioned, we have conducted interviews as well as collected a survey, and that really fed into our understanding of what's currently being conducted as far as measures that organizations and stakeholders in Michigan are currently doing and where the gaps might be and how we can find a focus area to align for a potential pilot. And so this is where we are right now, looking at building capacity and understanding more about what the needs are across organizations and then implementing a pilot which we'll be talking more about in 20, early 2016. And this is all been possible really through the input and guidance of the advisory committee, which has been helping us with making decisions on, you know, what, what this data really means, where we should be going. [Multiple speakers] and what are the needs of the communicators, and you'll hear more about that in, you know, the coming months, but really I think might be good to mention, our focused area has been on healthy food access, the economic impact, and institutional procurement. But, so that's just so a little reminder. Move this slide ahead. Kathryn, can you move the slide forward one -

Kathryn Colasanti: Yeah [multiple speakers].

Courtney Pinard: I thought I had it there. Thank you. And so through these interviews and surveys, it became apparent that there's really a wide range of data that's already being collected, and some of it might not even be considered data by those collecting or using it, and I think it's just important to highlight this is a strength and potential for Shared Measures and looking at where these overlaps are and how we can align. So looking across all these different types of data collection, groups that have common interest and even common types of measurements but not necessarily the same. So I think that's important, that we can look at those pieces that might overlap and how we can better align. And so we had, you know, a lot of qualitative information that people were already collecting through interviews and focus groups, and this I think is really right now is more of a novel area in understanding where consumers and communities are at. So we have develop kind of this basis with this qualitative information, and now as we move forward, you know, we have a better evidence base and understanding of what's going on. We can get into some more quantitative assessment. Not that we leave behind qualitative, but I think they kind of go hand in hand and also as a progression forward. And some of the things that people were doing that might not have been considered data collection per se by them or others is, you know, simple things with their programming like registration forms or embedded data. So anytime someone's participating in, say, a community garden, they complete a, a registration form, and we have information there. As well, embedded data is things more like tracking of participation. And even things in our food that's produced in, and distributed throughout the community. So things that are, you know, not necessarily a formal survey or, you know, a psycho-social variable, but it's very important to understand what's going on in the community. And then some of the, the most common types of surveys, we're really looking at food access. As I mentioned, that was one of our key areas that we will be focusing on. And so here is an opportunity to look at some of this overlapping types of information and how we can better align and help build the strength of what that data is being collected. And so next slide, Kathryn. They'll be a couple clicks. I think you can just put them all up there. So, you know, there's vary, various reasons why groups are collecting data, and I think they're all important, and they all relate, these and others would relate to Shared Measures. So people are interested in knowing does the program work, and then they can tailor at their practices and approaches better understanding your community and population. What are the barriers to food access, say, and then you can design a program around that. And also the need to have to report out to stakeholders like funders and policy makers and being able to demonstrate success so that you can further continue to support that programming. So those don't have to happen in siloes. They can really feed in and relate to Shared Measures, and you can see along the bottom where we are in terms of progress towards our won Shared Measures idea, and, you know, we've sort of built through identifying these existing measures where the gaps and overlaps and working on capacity and support across the organizations and thinking really strategically on how we can pilot something small that could then be disseminated more widely and then have future iterations that may pulled in other new areas beyond save food access. And thinking along the way how this aligns with what's going on across the state and nationally. So just keeping everyone on, you know, up to date on what are some of the best practices that, and keeping it also extremely useful and meaningful at the local level. So that's all for that piece. I can pass it back to Kathryn.

Kathryn Colasanti: Alright. Thank you, Courtney, and just one technical detail I forgot to mention when I did the introduction. If you have questions along the way, go ahead and take that into the, the chat box, [inaudible] make available for everyone to see or just for the panelists, and we'll moderate that as we go [inaudible] see those questions for the end. So I'm going to turn it over to Sue Ann Savas for an overview of program evaluation.

Sue Ann Savas: OK. Great. Thanks, Kathryn. So my job was to just give you a 15-minute high-level overview on what is program evaluation. I've provided you with a great definition by Carol Weiss. It's a simple but really comprehensive definition looking at systematic assessment. Courtney talked a little bit about that. The idea that evaluation covers operation and/or outcomes. When we think of program evaluation, a lot of times we think mostly program, but it can also involve policy, and everything that we do in evaluation is about comparison. So here we're talking about comparing to [inaudible] either explicit or implicit standards, and then we, in evaluation we always want to use our results to contribute to the improvement of the program or policy or to reach or to improving or re-engineering your program. So a really great simple definition by Carol Weiss that I think is useful. Next, I provide you with a very common framework that CDC developed this, has been using it for years. It's just the steps that are involved in program evaluation, and the first one is critical for us in social work, and I think for many of you online, this idea of engaging stakeholders. That the evaluation really needs to be stakeholder based, and there's a, the second step is the process of describing the program, which a lot of times we use logic models or some sort of theory of change to describe what the program is supposed to look like on its best day. Then we get involved with evaluation planning, and in a minute, I'll show you a common outline [inaudible] plan. In that eval plan, we need to identify what the design is. If we're going to use a pre-post design. If we're going to use case studies. If we're going to use a historical comparison group. So there's, and this is where a research method or research design kind of intersects the evaluation. Then we go in to collecting data, the qualitative, quantitative data, making sure that we've got the right collection method. In a minute, I'll show you some collection methods, and once we collect the data, we engage in verifying the data, analyzing the data, and really trying to make sense of the results. In our work, we do a lot where we bring stakeholders back in to interpret the data, interpret preliminary results, get engaged in the process of asking secondary questions so that we can make sure that the findings are going to be useful, and then the last step is really to make sure that findings are shared with all kinds of constituents. And so that information can be used at multiple levels. So the CDC evaluation steps very helpful, and they're available on the CDC site. So you can look that up, and it gives you all kinds of detail about what each step is. So just a little bit about what program evaluators do. This is from a survey from the American Eval Association just to say that we're involved with survey development, report writing. A lot of people spend time doing qualitative analysis because qualitative analysis takes a lot more time. We're also engaged in data entry, data processing, and you could see that almost thirty percent of us are involved with writing grant proposals. So many evaluators work closely with an organization, with a not-profit to write a grant proposal and then write the evaluation plan that will go with that. A quarter of us are involved with information system design as well. So just a little, a little picture on what it is that we're busy doing. Here's the common outline to an eval plan that I mentioned. So anytime you engage in evaluation work, you really need, it's ethical, and required that you lay out an evaluation plan. So you need to be thoughtful about your work, and it usually begins with what's the impetus of the evaluation. Usually answer the question sort of why now. Why are we engaging in evaluation? So we'll layout the need and any plan for using results, and then every evaluation is driven by key questions, and today I'm going to show you a couple slides on some examples of key eval questions. And then you also want to identify the design, and this is, again, where I mention, this is where research design comes in. So if you're going to use a weightless design or some other comparison design, this is where you would outline all of that, and if you had any sampling that you wanted to do, this is where you would layout the sampling piece as well. With this eval plan, it's also important that you kind of come clean on the limitations of your design, and so here's where you layout any kind of limitations or any places where the, there might be other alternative explanations for any change in outcome or impact. The data collection methodology section is next, and here's where you talk about whether you're going to use a focus group or a survey or even a combination of those. If you're going to use media content analysis or most significant change method of collection. So the data collection methodology describes your plan for collecting the data, who you're going to involve in that process, and then the next section, analysis plan, is where you outline sort of your plan for how you're going to analyze all that data. Once you've entered it, if you're using Excel, or you're going to use SBSS or some other application, what is your plan for analyzing the data. And here is where I usually indicate that I'm going to data visualization. So there's a, sort of a new thing that's been buzzing around in our field for the last few years. This idea of making sure that we're really careful about the way we present data, and so there's a whole set of principles around that. I follow the work of Dr. Stephanie Evergreen. She's got a great blog on her website. So she teaches you how to make dot plots and how to figure out which chart to use, which comparison to make for your data. So in the eval plan, we always indicate that that's what we're going to be doing. And then the, the next section is really about your plan for interpreting results. So sort of in the old days when I started evaluation work, we used to, you know, report the results and get them into a, you know, really great, great font and a great, you know, glossy sheet of paper as the cover sheet, and if we're lucky, we'd go to a printer and have them bound with those little swirly binders on the side. Nowadays, we spend a lot more time actually meeting with the stakeholders with our data biz graphics to say what do you think's going on with the data. And so more of our time and energy is spent on making sense of the results and bringing people together to talk through the results and try to understand the implications and the next steps for improvement versus spending time sort of crafting a fancy report. So in this section, this is where we would lay out who we would be meeting with and how we would be meeting with them. To what, you know, what would be some of the guiding questions to make sense of the results. And this is where evaluation has really become very localized. I mean, it's very much based in the community of the stakeholders that we engage in the beginning, would be involved. There may have been new stakeholders identified just because of the work. So we would engage those folks as well. At the end of the eval plan is where we layout our eval team. This is important if you're going to submit your eval plan to a funder. The funders are going to want to know that you've got a lead evaluator whose, whose been around and has some credibility and some experience with this particular focus or area or community or even population. And so the eval team, it needs to be put together in a, in a meaningful way. It, you know, for me, it always includes member sort of the community, recipients of the services. We'll, at times, we'll have advisors involved, but we really try to get a collaborative group together so that lots of stakeholders are included and reflected in the eval team. And the last section's the eval budget, and a lot of times we have people asking, well, how much does an evaluation cost, and basically, you know, it depends on who's funding it. There's some federal organizations that will fund your eval at twenty percent of the total operating cost of your program. There are others that say 15 percent is manageable, is reasonable. If you can take 15 percent.

Courtney Pinard: Alright. So Sue Ann was describing these different methods and the advantages and disadvantages of them, and I think it's nice that they also overlap with the things that were already going on. So everything kind of has its pros and cons, but you can kind of see on this slide what those are, but I think that seeing where they align and doing best practices across groups, you know, is going to be what's moving us forward towards Shared Measures. And some of the things here that pp may not have considered data such as media content or observations, kind of things to keep in mind that everything can be kind of considered data, and especially those things that monitor the process or processes of implementation that allow for replication would be beneficial. Now, OK. And evaluation results can actually be used to improve the implementation of the model or program, improving the reach of the program. So who we're delivering it to. Are we reaching our intended audience, and establishing fidelity to the protocol or model. So that's the whole process thing. So being able to replicate and to know exactly what's being implemented and is it true to the, the curriculum or whatever it was based on. And, oh, hi.

Sue Ann Savas: Hi, we're back.

Courtney Pinard: I was ad libbing here. [multiple speakers] We often in that [multiple speakers].

Courtney Pinard: OK. Sorry, everyone. I'll hand it back over to Sue Ann.

Sue Ann Savas: [Inaudible] are you, Courtney, or almost.

Courtney Pinard: I didn't know where exactly you were. So I had [inaudible] on this slide.

Sue Ann Savas: Oh, that's OK. So this is just a slide to say there's lots of different data collection methods, and one of the things you really need to do in this work is take some time to say what are the advantages and the challenges to each, to each method. And so I just gave you a few of my notes on it, but you definitely want to be careful and thoughtful about what you select, and one of the things that we worry about in an evaluation is sort of burdening the respondent. Asking them and meeting with them too much, and so you have to weigh that with the information that you need from them in order to answer those key eval questions. And there's a lot of information on the Internet. There's this great site that I, resource I provide you at the end called better eval dot org, and it gives you all kinds of tips and sample protocols and example questions and on what to use and how to engage in some of this collection. So this slide's just about results. So there's lots of different reasons to engage in evaluation. These are some common ones. People are really interested in improving their program's reach. Looking at improvements and implementation. We've been involved in a lot of projects about trying to re-engineer programs and this idea of not just [inaudible] something if it's not working well but really taking the time to re-engineer the model and rethink the program's theory of change. We also engage in evaluation work to establish fidelity to a model. So sometimes we'll find a program that's pretty specific about what the elements are and the sequence in the delivery of service, and people want to know if we take this model, and we put it in three or four different cities, can you tell us if it's being delivered according to, you know, the recipe, so to speak. So is there fidelity, is there adherence to the model. A lot of people engage in evaluation just to improve participant satisfaction, and that's a perfectly great place to begin. This idea of you're a service provider, and you want to make sure that you're improving satisfaction. Everybody's got, feeling good about the services. A lot of people ask me, so what's the standard for that. How [inaudible], like, what's, you know, what's a good number, and a lot of people, accreditation bodies use. Can you get it back to where it was? Accreditation bodies use 80 percent. So you want at least 80 percent of your participants to report satisfaction with services, and a lot of people use global satisfaction question, which is basically would you recommend this program to a friend or family member in a similar situation. And so satisfaction is an important part of evaluation, but it not an outcome, and that's also very important. Establishing that people are satisfied with your services, not the same as demonstrating that you've attained outcome. The last reason, of course, improving outcome attainability, sustainability of outcome, that outcomes are sustained over time beyond program is very important. Nowadays, fiscal accountability and outcome accountability are real important or critical that, to securing funds to deliver your services. So there's also a lot of energy spent on establishing what we call ROI, which return on investment. So given what you've put into the program, what is it that the participants are getting out and also in what ways are the commu, is the community changed because of the program. So those are some of the reasons why people engage in evaluation. And then I wanted to also provide you with just a really simple slide on evaluation approaches. So provide you with just a really simple slide on evaluation approaches. So for those of you that are thinking about engaging the services of an evaluation consultant or even getting into the, developing an evaluation operation within your organization, there are various approaches to evaluation, and these are three that are pretty common right now. But you want to find out, and you want to ask [inaudible], you know, evaluation consulting firm so what approach are you using. Because the approach that they're using is going to dictate the strategies that they use, to, to what degree they engage stakeholders. What they're hoping to accomplish with you. So the aims and the practices are different depending on which evaluation approach your, your evaluation consultant engages in. So these are three that you can look up. They're all listed in the better eval dot org site, but very, three very common ones. I'm particularly interested in the new one, developmental eval, by Patton, and this is one that a lot of people are starting to use. It's this whole idea of engaging in evaluation when we aren't quite sure what the program is, and the program is in development. In the past, we used to say, oh, if your program's still emerging, you know, just call us when it's done moving, when it's done changing, when it's done evolving. And Michael Patton basically said wait a minute. Why, we should be involved early, and we should gather information quickly and be able to use it to support and develop the program, and so in this, with this type of approach, when I'm doing this work, I'm an evaluator as much as I am a consultant to the project and where I engage in, ask questions early. I don't wait until, until things don't work out to say, oh, well, I'm sorry. We don't have any evidence that this worked. When we see that it's not working or when the theory of change doesn't make sense, or we can get involved early. And so this is a really great new approach that we're starting to see quite a bit, quite a bit of in our, in our field. And then the last slide is just some additional resources. So if you have a chance, you can follow up with some of these links to find out, more about evaluation because this was just meant to be a quick overview. So I think that's what you needed from me. I'm going to turn it over to Amanda.

Courtney Pinard: Should I just stop sharing my screen [multiple speakers]? OK.

Kathryn Colasanti: OK.

Amanda Edmonds: And waiting for it to come up, Kathryn. Oop, there we go. Once [inaudible] go through here. So I'm going to talk about On the Ground, and so everything that Courtney and Sue Ann have talked about is super, super awesome, but we at Growing Hope have never, I don't know, think we've ever had the chance to work with the university or kind of external evaluators. So we figured out how to, how to do it ourselves. I'd love the chance to, to do that more thorough work with a professional like Sue Ann, but I want to talk about what, and one of our contact's evaluation has been for us as well as how we framed our work. So our work is in a number of areas, the food systems, you can see them. Here gardens, farmer's markets, youth and schools, economic development as well as policy and advocacy and other, other pieces. And so when we ask the question about why, why we should evaluate good food work, and our two other presenters have talked about that, and, and I always like to say with evaluation what, what do we want to be able to say when we're done. So what, what are we trying to get to? And so as we talked about already, we're trying to look at if we've met our goals, made progress, know that we're making a difference. We are, we like to say where are we moving the needle on the things that we're trying to move needle on, understand trends, know who we are reaching, share our success, raise funds, plan for the future, etc. So we actually organize our work [inaudible] into this framework, which is about three, four main outcome areas with three external outcomes, which is about growing healthy people, healthy places, and healthy economies, and that the core events growing a healthy organization are things we do internally to do that. And I mention this here around other guiding frameworks because what I found is really important in our collaborative world of food work is that we are, is that we look to align our plans, our goals, our outcomes with other identified community plans, community goals, community outcomes. And so we've actually mapped our [inaudible] plan and outcomes that we're, that we're getting towards to others, but that's also meant that is that when we have shared outcomes, we can also look at opportunities for using shared tools. So, for instance, we use USDA's, a piece of USDA's food security survey, which is a free available survey as part of evaluation we do for a number of programs. Because that's data that aligns with other local, regional, national plans, that there is a local, regional, and national baseline data. So we do that whenever we can or we find with shared measures perspective what other tools are guiding what other outcomes that we also share and have them integrate those into our work. So I think that's a valuable thing to do is to look at what other people's goals are, what other people's outcomes are where there's overlap, and then how are they evaluating, and can you evaluate in any of the same ways. And so, you know, I think the power of measurement [inaudible] very, very quickly, but we look at some of our early eras of, of urban gardening in the U.S. Back in the 1890's, there was a program that was taking vacant land and unemployed folks, and matching up, them up, and sort of known as the vacant lot cultivation era, and, and there was great data. Because in the early eras of the, the garden movements in the late 1800's through mid 1900's, our government collected a lot of really great data that, as Sue Ann, was talking about that, the ROI, we really need a venue to every dollar invested in that program, $9 [inaudible] one metric, right. But that's a pretty powerful metric, and if I could say that metric about our garden programs and know that off the top of my head, then that would be pretty powerful. I'm pleased to be able to say, though, that I do know that for the home vegetable gardens, we install [inaudible] low-income families where we help them install three four by four foot beds, and they then have a scale that they weigh and track that families on average are growing 90 fruits, 90 servings of fruits and vegetables just in the first four or five months of their first season. So that's a little tidbit, that's one, one little metric, but that metric is so, so, so very powerful that we usually don't share it all the time. So we know also then during World War, World War I, World War II, more garden eras, we also have this great data about the percentage of our vegetable supply we were growing in our home community school and our victory gardens. So how much value of food was going and was being grown, and we were able to know, you know, what is the impact of these investments. So fast forward, and we're not nearly as good at, at knowing some of those things, and, yet, we have data that we're trying to, and, and, and issues that we're really trying to move the needle on. So this is a, the growth and overweight and obese adults in Washtenaw County, and we see this great data that's coming out from our Public Health Department or coming up in the state, etc. So when I think about, again, data and evaluation, and what we're doing on the ground, I first also look at what other data is out there, and how we want to figure out with this goal and outcome that's happening at the county level, how are we moving the needle. And you look at other data that drives us in what we're doing, which is very powerful in selling a story. So other people's data is very powerful in telling a story of what you're doing as well. So this is the most shocking of it, and this is launched by Washtenaw County, where I live, and Ypsilanti area [inaudible] city and township, and you're looking at average age of death, twenty years younger than, than that in [Inaudible] County. So data paints that picture, and helps us know things like this is national data from the garden sector. You're, the National Gardening Association does, conducts the industry, the lawn and garden industry research that is bought by all the lawn and garden companies and stores around people growing their own food. And you look at their data about how many people are or intend to grow their own food and, and the spread of household income. And I can actually look at this data and compare it to data about people participating in my community and my programs and see where I am, benchmarking against national trends this way. So I'm going to run through really quickly our outcomes and how we frame them. I'm not going to read them all. People can maybe see the slides later, or you can e-mail me for them, but the point is just to show you how we set it up and then give you an example of some of the, some of the things that we actually do and collect it and evaluate. So, again, our work is organized around healthy people, healthy places, healthy economies, and each of these areas, lots of [inaudible] green. We actually have a, a longer vision statement, and we have three to five outcomes. So growing self-reliance, growing healthy habits, growing healthy youth, growing healthy equity, growing health equity, growing diverse leadership, and we've got a statement that is an outcome statement. Similarly, around growing healthy places, we've got a, a set of, here are five different outcomes that we're going for in growing healthy economies. We've got three. So I know you can read all of those, but just, again, to show how we've broken that down, we said so, OK. Well, if our goal is to grow healthy habits where outcome is that people have skills, knowledge, and motivation to eat better and improve their health, these are the four things that we track, measure, evaluate, etc. that helps us throughout our different program areas and helps us understand how well we're growing healthy habits. Certainly, if we look at one of our growing healthy places outcomes, which is about [inaudible] good access, these are the things that we're looking at to know if we are moving the needle on that, on that area. And finally around growing the local food economy. So I'm going to talk [inaudible] just about the farmer's market, and so I teach farmer's market evaluation, tracking across the state. We were probably the most evaluated farmer's market across the state, but it's, it's because we do it, we do it all ourselves, and we have integrated data and tracking and evaluation into our everyday operations at the market. So we do this all ourselves. We do this with volunteers. We do this with our staff, our vendors, our customers participate with us so that we know a lot of things, and, and evaluation isn't just something that we do at the end of a market season and hope we get a couple of people to answer some surveys and we know some things. This evaluation is what we do every day. So we have a whole, I'm going to give you just a sampling. We have a whole realm of evaluations from participation logs. We talked about just participation as one of the things that, that is evaluation. Counting attendance, customers. So we actually know how many people have come through our markets. We run three, six-month a year markets, one winter market, and three farm stands every hour of every day for ten years now for our longest market. Because we've just made it part of the everyday, the everyday market day that someone is, actually two people have little hand clickers that you buy for ten dollars at Staples and are counting. And we have a little sheet where you write it down, and we compare and contrast especially when we have two people counting, someone's new, to get an average or see who [inaudible] who is right, and that is just the norm. And so the fact that I can tell you that 20,000 people came through my two markets last year in just six months, it's a huge thing to be able to say. To be able to say that 800 people is an average market attendance in a pretty small downtown Ypsilanti is being able to say it's like we run a small festival, or actually a medium or kind of large-size festival once, twice a week, 26 weeks because, a year just in Ypsilanti. That is very powerful data that is just simple as making it part of the norm or part of just the on-the-ground work that volunteer or staff where someone is sitting there counting. We use surveys, dot surveys, notes, journals, etc., etc., sales data, and I'm going to give you some examples. So this shows our total sales by month [inaudible] 2014 at just our Tuesday farmer's market, and this is actually all hooked up in a vacuum spreadsheet that we made many years ago where we record from each vendor every day what their sales are and all [inaudible] of currency. So that's SNAP and other food assistance as well as cash, and that's an expectation that's rare at markets, but we set [inaudible] at the beginning and as part of you want to be part of our market, you do this. So we know that last year there were $255,000 of sales to local, to about 96 small businesses by customers in our local area. We know that half of our vendors have household incomes of less than $30,000 a year, and that's from our annual vendor survey that our vendors can't get their last reimbursement check until they've turned in that survey. We've made that the norm in our market. And we see these trends and actually are sales data we plug in weekly, automatically populates into these graphs where we can at any given moment pull the graph and say how are we doing. We look at and, and track total sales versus food assistance sales, and we can, and look at the, the trends over, the trends over time, and we are able to do this with these connected spreadsheets that we set up, and we actually share them with other markets. We're able to us these to pivot. Hey, what's going on?

Hey, what's happening? This is something, something's changing. So we really use this sort of tracking and evaluation not for the external, both for the external impact but also really to, to inform how we're doing, what we're doing in an everyday sense. Hey, why are numbers so small? Hey, you know what? It looks like we, we pulled back on the number of vendors because we thought we were kind of beyond capacity, but, look, it's really affecting everyone's sales now. Maybe it's time to add a couple more vendors. Those are decisions that we are making in an ongoing way based on this, this sort of tracking and evaluation that we've integrated into our everyday. You can also look at things like this, which is our relationship between food assistance sales and, and cash sales as well as credit card sales, and we can look and make the case about how the market has grown. How important those non-cash sales are, which constituted 38 percent of our sales last year to our, to our market base and the, and the sales for our vendors. We're looking, again, at attendance. We're looking at, at sales in an ongoing way, and then we do a, an in-depth, like, very, very long, but our customers, they put up with it. Customer survey and vendor survey at the end of the season. So it's a six-stage survey with, like, sixty questions, and we've been doing this every year for ten years at our downtown market, and we're actually able to now start looking at change over time. We have no time and no [inaudible] analyze sort of longitudinally, but we have all the data, and it's really helpful, but for us to, again, understand the impact as well as, as make this [inaudible] about how we manage. So how many [inaudible] market. We spend so much time on flyers and postcards, etc., etc., and you see this that really most of our people first hear by word of mouth. Well, that informs our strategy. That informs where our energy is going. That informs what we're, what we're doing or, or what we, what we're not doing that we should be doing about how to reach our customers. So we use a sample size, [inaudible], again a minimum of 100 surveys in each of our markets. So we have three main-season markets now. So we get a minimum of 100 surveys that we're mostly doing in person. We do it online as well, but that we work for about a month with someone out there at the markets every week to get people to, to take these surveys. Some other samples that, that help us look over, over time and help us secure other markets in the state, and [inaudible] is when you just start coming to this market. How long ago? We can look again at that over time, and it's really helpful that, to learn that actually we're having more and more and more repeat customers and people who come back week after week, and have been coming for year after year after year. Look at things like the household income. Half our, over half our customers last year had household incomes of less than $45,000. And, again, is 100 the right sample size? A 100 is really a lot of surveys for us to get of a market between, again, a daily attendance between 400, 500, and 900. Hundred is, is, is no joke for us, and so that's what we go with, right. So [inaudible] most scientifically valid, we don't know, but we think it's pretty good, and it's more than most people, more than most people know, and we look at the relationship to the market in our data to other, to other businesses. We, we have a lot more information than most festivals do about their economic impact, about their participation. We have a whole lot more than most businesses do. So when we're trying to play in the bigwigs of the market is part of the economic base for our city, our data is, is, may not be perfect, but it's a whole lot more than other people have. How far do you travel to come to this market? How much money do you spend each week at market? Now this, how much do you spend at the week at the market and some related questions, we actually plug into a national tool called, from an organization called the Market Umbrella. It's a free tool to measure the economic impact of markets. So we've integrated the five questions that that tool has you ask. Have, has you ask, and we've integrated into our longer survey, and then we plug just the results of those five questions into a tool. Takes a while to kind of type it all in, and then it spits out some data around impact, and I'll get to that in a second. So we, we always do produce sampling and healthy cooking sampling at our markets, and, and we see what influence that made on, on people's purchases in the market. So this is just some sampling's of the kind of things we're getting to. Here's our picture that economic impact tool, and we know that in 2014, our total economic impact of our two [inaudible] markets between May and October was 2.48 million dollars, and that's a, you know, those tools just like any evaluation tool have strengths and weaknesses, but that's a number that most people don't know and that we're able to use every day about really the difference that the market makes in, in that realm. So that's just a couple pieces of samples, of some of the ways that we use ongoing, ongoing evaluation and data collection to inform what we're doing, to inform making the case, to, to help us shift and pivot and make changes as well as to know that impact, but thinking about those other things, like photos, like interviews, like stories, and whether you're doing interviews, and you're doing a formal sort of qualitative analysis of what words came up, how many times, etc., or you're just using that to sort of make your case overall. To us, that's part of data and tracking and evaluation. So everyone can do that and setting a culture, but this is something that we do, and we do in an ongoing way. I think it's really been what's valuable to us, and the markets are the things that we evaluate the best. 6 Some of our other work, you know, we feel like we have a way to go, but bit by bit, we do it. So there you go.

Kathryn Colasanti: [Inaudible] Thank you so much, Amanda and Sue Ann and Courtney. That was a, a wealth of information. And we're almost at 2:30, but thank you for everyone who hung on during that loss of Internet and the, the downtime there. And I think because we, we had that snafu, we'll we'll stay on for a few more minutes if there are questions. So let's me see if we can pull up questions. OK.

We did have a question earlier on when we can send out the slides, and if our [inaudible] -

Of course, [multiple speakers] OK, yeah.

We'll, we'll absolutely compile all of the slides from all three presenters. [Inaudible]

Kathryn Colasanti: So if anyone else has a question for any of the presenters, go ahead and take that into the chat box.

Yeah. We'll also put together the recording if you want to listen to anything that you heard today again or share with any of your colleagues, and the good news is we can edit out that break, and no one will ever know it happened.

Amanda Edmonds: [Multiple speakers] something that you did evaluation and tracking and data as a motivator I think is really powerful. Years ago, I was, years ago, I went to my [inaudible] where someone had started a, at a, someone had started a place of worship, a garden, and they, that was specifically for donation, and they knew and had counted number of volunteers, number of volunteer hours, number of seed, number of seedlings, and we're able to, you know, say and make that case that, hey, we put in this many x, y, or z, and we got [inaudible], and just like using very, very simple data like was so inspirational. I'm, hey, I could do that. Hey, I can, you know, is where we break everything down to four by four square feet and what you can do in a square, and knowing that you can produce this much, etc., but I think the power of even very simple kind of tracking is, is really a motivator to, to doing this work -

Kathryn Colasanti: Yeah, absolutely.

Yeah. Another request for the PowerPoint. Yup, we will send those out with all those slides together.

Kathryn Colasanti: OK. Last call for any questions and/or comments before we adjourn.

Alright. Well, thank you, again, for participating today, and thank you to all three of our presenters. We really appreciate taking time to share.