

# Rural Grocery

## Resource Providers & Support Organizations

*Rural grocers across the country face a multitude of challenges. Fortunately, many organizations are working to address these issues. This is not a complete list; rather, it includes a few of the Rural Grocery Initiative's most common referrals and partners, several of whom helped develop the "Keeping Groceries Alive" webinar series.*



The **Food Co-op Initiative\*** aims to increase the number, success and sustainability of new food cooperatives delivering access to healthy food in diverse communities across this country. It provides information, training and technical assistance, as well as seed capital, and engages in research to blaze, maintain and improve the development path for new food coops.

[www.fci.coop](http://www.fci.coop)



The **Iowa Retail Initiative** (IRI) at Iowa State University provides resources for communities to assess their retail environment and prioritize areas of growth. IRI Coaching assists retailers in store design and layout and basic business operations knowledge. IRI provides support to immigrant entrepreneurs and has worked on projects that explore the connection between Hispanic groceries and rural communities.

[www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/iri](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/iri)



The **Kansas Center for Business Transition\*** is a program of the Kansas Small Business Development Center. It supports the continuity and growth of small businesses with education and resources that benefit both the businesses and their communities.

[www.ksbiztransition.com](http://www.ksbiztransition.com)



The **Kansas Energy Program** is housed within K-State Engineering Extension and provides energy education, grant information, and technical assistance to Kansas small businesses, K-12 educators, and governmental entities. Through these services, their goal is to encourage the development and implementation of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

[www.kansasenergyprogram.org](http://www.kansasenergyprogram.org)



The **Kansas Rural Center\*** is led by and for farmers and ranchers who strive to help each other and their rural communities grow a healthy food and farming system here at home, in Kansas.

[www.kansasruralcenter.org](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org)



**K-State Research and Extension\*** connects people across the state with the knowledge and science of Kansas State University by offering practical, research-based education. K-State Research and Extension provides education and support through in-person classes or training, online classes, webinars, articles and publications.

[www.ksre.k-state.edu](http://www.ksre.k-state.edu)



**NetWork Kansas\*** is a statewide resource organization devoted to the growth of entrepreneurship and small businesses throughout the state of Kansas.

[www.networkkansas.com](http://www.networkkansas.com)

\* Partner in developing the webinar series, "Keeping Groceries Alive: Successful Ownership Transitions for Rural Grocery Stores."



The **North Dakota Rural Grocery Initiative** is led by the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC). This group has conducted several rural grocery surveys to better understand the baseline issues that rural groceries face in North Dakota. They have also explored potential alternative distribution models in order to serve rural grocery stores more effectively. They also played an instrumental role in the passing of state legislation to study distribution and transportation of food throughout the state of North Dakota.

[www.ndarec.com/ruralgrocery](http://www.ndarec.com/ruralgrocery)



**Northwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center** believes in its region's rich past and endless possibilities for tomorrow. That's why, as a private foundation, they offer economic and entrepreneurial assistance to businesses in rural Northwest Kansas. They work to create economic growth and increase population throughout a 26-county coverage area by offering a variety of programs and initiatives.

[www.nwkeici.org](http://www.nwkeici.org)

Regional Sustainable  
Development Partnerships

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
EXTENSION

The University of Minnesota Extension's **Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships** (RSDP) supports rural grocery stores and offers fresh produce handling guides for small retailers, information on how to work with farmers to sell locally grown produce, and in-store produce handling training and education. They also conduct research on innovative ways to help farmers sell local produce through rural grocers.

[www.extension.umn.edu/community-development/rural-grocery-stores](http://www.extension.umn.edu/community-development/rural-grocery-stores)



The mission of the **Rural Grocery Initiative\*** (RGI) is to provide resources to help sustain and enhance independently-owned rural grocery stores. RGI assists communities and citizens to strengthen rural grocery operations and improve access to healthy foods. Since 2007, RGI has conducted research, developed resources, and provided informational assistance for communities and businesses.

[www.ruralgrocery.org](http://www.ruralgrocery.org)



**Rural Prosperity Nebraska** at Nebraska Extension harnesses boots-on-the-ground efforts of Nebraska Extension professionals working in six focus areas. The team working to support rural grocery stores aims to support local economies and entrepreneurs.

[www.ruralprosperityne.unl.edu](http://www.ruralprosperityne.unl.edu)



The **U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development** is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in rural America. Through their programs, they help rural Americans in many ways.

[www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov)



The **Value-Added Sustainable Development Center** at the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs helps community-owned businesses start up and grow, especially businesses in grocery, agriculture, local foods, and renewable energy. A particular focus is on the rejuvenation of small-town grocery stores which are having to adjust to rapidly changing market conditions.

[www.value-added.org](http://www.value-added.org)