



Rural Grocery Store Sustainability Grant 2025-2027 Biennium

Purpose: The purpose of the Rural Grocery Store Sustainability Grant program is to support the sustainability of rural grocery service, access to food, and/or development and expansion of food co-ops in rural areas. Food co-ops are centralized facilities or nonprofits that play a crucial role in aggregating, storing, processing, and distributing food to consumers, retailers, institutions, or other markets. This grant program aims to address specific challenges faced by rural communities related to food access, economic development, and sustainability.

Mission: The Department of Commerce leads the efforts to attract, retain, and expand wealth and improve the quality of life for the people of North Dakota.

Program Objectives:

- Strengthen local and regional food systems by facilitating the efficient movement of healthy, quality foods within rural areas.
- Encourage partnerships and collaboration between local organizations, businesses, and government entities.
- Support innovative approaches to address unique challenges faced by rural areas in sustainable food supply and delivery.
- Foster community development and revitalization efforts in rural regions.
- Provide collaboration between food supply and community entities such as restaurants, schools or other entities which purchase grocery products and provide positive economic impacts for the community/region.

This grant awards dollars to support the transition, creation or expansion of projects or initiatives that aim to maintain or increase food accessibility and sustainability for entities that have developed profit loss statements and backup materials to show the expansion of the project will be sustainable.

This grant will not fund regular maintenance of equipment or facilities, projects that do not provide affordability and availability of food products, inventory purchasing, financing costs, or applications that do not have sustainable profit/loss or business plans which provide long term sustainability for food access. Funding for existing food access/businesses will be considered for cost to build for expansion of existing facilities if needed for sustainability, expansion of equipment to bring additional services or products to support viability, items that meet the opportunity for collaboration, cost efficiencies, and/or automation.

Eligible Entities – Political subdivisions, regional councils, and tribal entities.

Points (5) will be awarded to applications that demonstrate regional cooperation.

How much funding is available?

Up to \$150,000 per rural* applicant.

***Rural** shall be defined as any community or region, based on the application, with a population 4,500 or fewer.

Matching Requirements: A 20% non-state funded match is required. This can be provided by public, private, or other nonprofit support, and includes in-kind donation.

Project Timeline: All projects must be completed within 18 months of award notification.

Application Window:

Opens: Applications will be accepted beginning Wednesday, July 9 at 3 PM CST.

Close: The last day to submit an application for consideration of award is Wednesday, September 3 at 5 PM CST.

Award: Applicants will be notified of award acceptance or declination by Wednesday, September 17.