

# Rural Prosperity Nebraska Impact At-A-Glance



ruralprosperityne.unl.edu



Rural Prosperity Nebraska is helping Nebraskans access the food and nutrition they need. Creating cooperative grocery stores, farm-to-school connections, and Native American Food sovereignty programs decreases food deserts in Nebraska.

A local grocery store keeps small rural communities alive. A community-owned store supports the local economy, preserves the town's local character and provides access to food. It is about quality of life. Restoring this quality-of-life amenity was a major driver behind the establishment of Valley Foods Cooperative in Lynch, Nebraska. Two years after the local grocery store closed, residents in Lynch began to explore reopening the store as a cooperative. With technical assistance from Extension's Nebraska Cooperative Development Center and Rural Prosperity Nebraska, the cooperative opened in early 2022, restoring grocery access in Lynch. "This is about quality of life," said Janie Fisher, Valley Foods Cooperative board member.

"It takes a village to raise a child, and it takes a community to raise a grocery store," shared Janie Fisher, Valley Foods Cooperative board member. Extension supports communities helping them create vibrant futures.

**49% OF NEBRASKA COUNTIES  
HAVE RESIDENTS WHO LIVE IN  
A FOOD DESERT**

RPN mitigates food deserts with cooperative development, business transition and building local food systems.

**8 FARM TO SCHOOL  
PROGRAMS WERE  
CREATED**

Farm to School programs are supported by RPN through the inaugural Farm to School Institute.

**9,620 MARKET-  
MAKER VIEWS**

High traffic on <http://ne.foodmarketmaker.com> with a total of 562 business profiles.



**STRENGTHEN NEBRASKA  
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

**INSPIRE NEBRASKANS &  
THEIR COMMUNITIES**

**ENHANCE THE HEALTH  
& WELLBEING OF ALL  
NEBRASKANS**

# Rural Prosperity Nebraska



**Inspire Nebraskans & Their Communities** Through Extension, rural communities find ways to engage residents of every age, interest, and background in reimagining the trajectory of the place they call home. Helping them discover their strengths and transforming them into vitality and prosperity. Encouraging diversity, entrepreneurship, innovation, and investment. Leveraging the research and resources of the University and convening stakeholders to envision the future of their hometown—and turn that vision into reality.

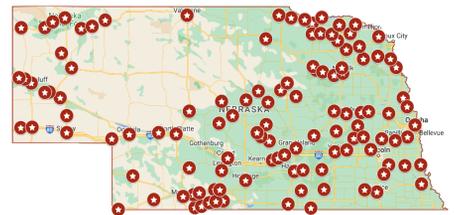
## **ENGAGING VALENTINE, NE**

Nebraska Extension engaged with the city of Valentine to build community capacity to help enable a more prosperous future for the community. Valentine identified a need to increase available housing, high quality, childcare, and a plan to address the highway upgrade to Main Street.

- Valentine engaged with UNL Landscape Architecture students and the Nebraska Department of Transportation to complete the

design which was completed in the fall of 2022 with the planting of trees.

- They have engaged with UNL Architecture students to design housing developments and reserved and matched funding for housing development.
- They are actively working with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation to increase childcare options.



Food sovereignty is the core of Nation Nourishment, a hands-on and classroom experience for Umo'ho<sup>o</sup> Nation members learning to grow food. Over half of learners have gained skills leading to employment. Two learners have started their own business growing and selling fruits and vegetables.



## **NEARLY 70%**

of Nation Nourishment learners realized savings in their grocery budget, on average saving \$85.29/week.

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Data and content in this document are based on Nebraska Extension programming and initiatives during 2022.