

Rural Prosperity Nebraska 2024 Impact At-A-Glance



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Rural Prosperity Nebraska programs strengthen rural Nebraska economies through entrepreneur-led development and ecosystem building.

Faced with a cramped boutique, Jessalyn and Dustin Crawford of Hey Honey Boutique in Ord, Nebraska, needed a bigger space. With help from Rural Prosperity Nebraska's grant-funded eCommunities team, they purchased and renovated a historic downtown building. The local business "eCoach" guided them through funding options like USDA Rural Development grants and tax credits, enabling the Crawfords to create a thriving hub combining a boutique, gun shop, and coffee bar. Restoring the 1880s building revitalized their business and community, proving how collaboration fuels economic growth and preserves local history.

Reflecting on the eCommunities program - "collaboration leads to greater outcomes because stakeholders are better informed, which leads to partnerships and referrals" - eCommunities local leader and partner

150

Businesses were started in 2024 with support from RPN's Latino Small Business Program

\$13,611,410

in increased or saved revenue for businesses and entrepreneurs who received eCommunities business coaching

500+

Entrepreneurs attended the Spanish-language Latino Small Business Conferences



STRENGTHEN NEBRASKA AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

INSPIRE NEBRASKANS & THEIR COMMUNITIES

ENHANCE THE HEALTH & WELLBEING OF ALL NEBRASKANS



Inspire Nebraskans and Their Communities

Through Extension, rural communities find ways to engage residents of every age, interest, and background in re-imagining the trajectory of the place they call home by helping them discover their strengths and harnessing them for positive change. These collaborations leverage the research and resources of the University, while encouraging diversity, entrepreneurship, innovation, and investment.

Rural Prosperity Nebraska 2024 Highlights

Building upon the findings of the 2023 Leadership Chautauqua, the **RPN Community Leadership Development Team** hosted six statewide peer-learning webinars supporting leadership capacity development, where 100+ Nebraskans participated.

Through the efforts of the **Native American Coalition**:

- 18 Native American students participated in the Hoop of Learning college bridge program, earning both high school and college credits.
- 38 learners completed Tribal Engagement Training, emphasizing stewardship, Indigenous worldviews, and holistic growth through the four directions of the Medicine Wheel.

RPN, a Heartland Regional Food Business Center (HRFBC) partner, supports Nebraska food businesses with technical assistance, networking, and resources. It collaborates with farmers, entrepreneurs, and markets to grow capacity and resilient food systems.



109

HRFBC Business Builder Grant applications received from Nebraska small farmers and local food businesses.